History of the Sikhs

Vol. II

Evolution of Sikh Confederacies (1707–69)

History of the Sikhs is planned as a five-volume survey aiming to present a comprehensive view of the rise, growth and development of Sikh thought and action in every direction. This volume—*Evolution of Sikh Confederacies (1707-69)*, is second in the series. The whole series is based on original contemporary sources in Persian, Marathi, Gurumukhi, Urdu, Hindi, and English known to exist in India and abroad.

The dominating theme of the second volume is the Mughal-Sikh and Sikh-Afghan contest for the lordship of the Punjab. The first period of the struggle between the Mughal Emperors and the Sikhs under Banda Bahadur lasted from 1709 to 1716, when Banda was executed.

The second period of conflict was from 1716 to 1753 between the Sikhs and five Mughal viceroys of the Punjab—Abdus-Samad Khan, his son Zakariya Khan, his sons Yahya Khan and Shahnawaz Khan and their cousin Muin-ul-Mulk, popularly called Mir Mannu. The third period extended from 1754 to 1768 in the strife against Ahmad Shah Durrani who had annexed the Punjab in 1752. He inflicted the heaviest blows on the Sikhs like the one struck on the Marathas at Panipat in 1761. Having sacrificed about two lakhs of young men in the whole struggle the Sikhs came out victorious. The two chapters at the end give an account of Mughlani Begam and Adina Beg Khan, the last Muslim viceroys of the Punjab.

Dr. Hari Ram Gupta (1902–93), had his education at Lahore. He was the first person to receive the degrees of Ph.D. and D.Litt. in History from the University of the Punjab, Lahore, and his examiners were Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Sir Edward Maclagan, ex-Governor of the Punjab and Professor H.H. Dodwell of London University.

Dr. Gupta was a lecturer at Forman Christian College, Lahore, founder principal of Vaish College, Bhiwani (Haryana), and Head of the Department of History at Aitchison College, Lahore. He served for thirteen years as Professor and Head of the Department of History, and for over a year as Dean University Instruction, Punjab University, Chandigarh. Later he worked for three years as Honorary Professor in the Department of History, University of Delhi. He also headed the Postgraduate Department of History as Honorary Professor at Dev Samaj College for Women, Firozpur, Punjab.

Dr. Gupta is the author of over a dozen research volumes including three volumes on India-Pakistan War, 1965. He enjoyed international reputation as an authority on the history of Punjab and North-West Frontier. The Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, conferred upon him in 1949 the Sir Jadunath Sarkar gold medal for his "outstanding original contribution to the history of Punjab."

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HISTORY OF THE SIKHS

(Complete in Five volumes)

I

The Sikh Gurus, 1469-1708

II

Evolution of Sikh Confederacies, 1708-69

III

Sikh Domination of the Mughal Empire, 1764-1803

IV

The Sikh Commonwealth or Rise and Fall of Sikh Misls

V

The Sikh Lion of Lahore (Maharaja Ranjit Singh , 1799-1839)

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HISTORY OF THE SIKHS

Vol. II

Evolution of Sikh Confederacies

(1708-69)

Hari Ram Gupta

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to
the brave and noble Sikh Heroes of the eighteenth century, through whose valour, resourcefulness, cheerful endurance and supreme sacrifice, a grave peril threatening this country was averted.

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"The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

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Abbreviations

The names of works are chronologically arranged according to their date of composition. The following abbreviations have been generally used.

ASB	Asiatic Society of Bengal
Br. ML	British Museum Library
CPC	Calendar of Persian Correspondence
ED	History of India as told by its own Historians, edited by Elliot and Dowson
Ethe	Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts of *I.O.L.*
IHQ	Indian Historical Quarterly
IOL	India Office Library
JASB	Journal of the *A.S.B.*
JNS	Sir Jadunath Sarkar's Library, Calcutta
OPLB	Oriental Public Library, Bankipur
PPL	Panjab Public Library, Lahore
PUL	Panjab University, Lahore
Rieu	Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts of the *Br. M.L.*
SPD	Selections from Peshwa Daftar

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Foreword

Professor Hari Ram Gupta's thesis on the Evolution of the Sikh Confederacies (*i.e.*, *misls*), which I examined, along with Sir Edward Maclagan, the scholarly ex-Governor of the Panjab, for the Ph.D. degree of the Panjab University,—struck me as a work of outstanding merit which competently fills up a gap in our knowledge of modern Indian history. I have, therefore, urged the author to print it and have put him on the way to securing financial assistance for the purpose.

As Dr. Gupta has pointed out, while the history of the Sikh Gurus (terminating in 1715, if we include Banda) has been repeatedly worked over, and that of Ranjit Singh is still better known, the intervening period of the rise of the *misls* and their occupation of the Panjab has not been studied by scholars. And yet this period is one of absorbing interest and historical importance, because it represents the formative stage of the Sikhs as a political power.

The subject, at the outset, presented difficulties only commensurate with its attractiveness and importance. How the evidence lay scattered mostly in manuscript sources in more than half a dozen languages and the manuscripts could be consulted only in several libraries,—in one case more than a thousand miles distant,—has been described by the author. I have seen this thesis when under construction and also in its finished state, and can testify to the industry and success with which Dr. Gupta has utilsed an immense number of scraps of information and pieced them together into a compact readable whole. The necessity of reducing the cost of printing has forced him to cut out all oriental quotations and even "justificative pieces" in English, and also to compress the foot-notes with extreme severity, and henee there is some danger of the reader underestimating the author's erudition and the reliability of his narrative. But I who went through his history in its

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original complete form in manuscript, feel confident that it stands in an unassailable position. The long critical bibliography first written by him has been similarly cut down, in printing, to a bare list of names, but it proves that the author has left no sources untapped and taken nothing without a critical examination.

One period of Panjab history—and that of the Delhi Empire, too,—has thus been set up on a granite foundation. It ought to serve as a model to other workers on Indian history.

JADUNATH SARKAR

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Preface to the First Edition

Of all the provinces of India, the Panjab—the point of impact between India and the ever moving peoples of the North-West-must always have a peculiar interest to a student of Indian history. Similarly, in the history of the Panjab, there is no other feature so interesting as the history of the Sikhs. Some aspects of the history of these people have been pretty fully treated by previous writers. For instance, the history of the Sikh Church and the early struggle between this community and the Mughal Government (1469-1715) have been very well described by European and Indian scholars. Again, the history of the Sikh monarchy under Ranjit Singh and his successors (1799-1849) has also been ably dealt with by standard writers.

The intervening period (1716-1799), however, if not altogether neglected, has not received the attention it deserves. This period forms one of the most important chapters of Sikh history. It was during this time that the Sikhs evolved themselves, by the strength of their own arms, into one of the finest military peoples of the world. It was now that the Sikhs entered on their meteoric career by availing themselves of the many opportunities open to genius and ambition, for carving out independent principalities on the ashes of the Mughal Empire. It was then that they developed the germs of a worthier political existence and began to make themselves fit for the task of building up a kingdom. It was at this time that they played the most important part in the politics of Northern India, during the whirlwind incursions of foreign hordes from 1739 to 1799. It was in these days that the Sikhs rendered the most invaluable services to the cause of our country by putting a dead stop to all foreign invasions from the North-West.

It was this importance of the period that induced the present writer to take up this subject, which proved in the end to be the

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most fascinating field that was ever found waiting for exploration by a student of history. How far he has succeeded in his attempt it is for the reader to judge.

The author very much wished that he could have dealt with the whole of this intervening period. But with great disappointment, he had eventually to excise the earlier portion of it (namely the years 1716-1738), as there was very scanty material available. Whatever material exists, comes from Sikh sources, is based on tradition alone, with no contemporary evidence on record. Hence he has found 1739 as his most suitable starting point. It was in this year that the terrible Nadir, at the head of a numerous sturdy race of warriors, swept down the unprotected plains of India with irresistible violence. Not only did his campaign give the finishing stroke to the crumbling house of Babar, but it also brought to perfection the confusion and chaos prevailing in the country. It was now that the Hindu peasantry, crushed under the oppression of centuries was disillusioned of the greatness of the mighty Mughals and as a consequence rose up in arms, out of sheer exasperation, against the Mughal Government. They joined the ranks of the Khalsa because they knew that these were the only people in the Panjab who could offer stout opposition to their oppressors. Consequently, the whole country between the Ravi and the Jumna was turned into a theatre of ceaseless struggle by a people fighting for independence. The present outbreak of the Sikhs differed from those preceding it under Guru Hargobind, Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bahadur, in this that whereas the latter were religious outbursts which had sprung up out of hatred and vengeance for the loss of their leader and their own oppression at the hands of the Government, the present struggle was a fight for the ideal of independence and sovereignty which the Sikhs had now placed before themselves.

The reason for selecting 1768 as the other limit of my enquiry is that this year witnessed the establishment of the Sikhs as a political and territorial power. They had successfully repelled the last invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the previous year. They had become undisputed masters of Lahore, the capital of the Panjab, and exercised sovereign power in the major portion of the province. They, therefore, stood between the Mughal Empire of Delhi and the Durrani kingdom of Kabul, and not only prevented the mutual contact of these two empires, but also starved the Indian Muslim

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potentates by stopping the importation of fresh blood from the North-Western regions to replenish their exhausted forces, and thus brought about their speedy death. This period, therefore, is the point of division between the disruption of the old Empire and the formation of the new kingdoms.

A word of explanation about the sources of this work seems desirable at this place. It is no doubt true that the documentry materials for this period are rather scanty. The court annals of Delhi refer only sparingly to Panjab affairs on account of the political and economic upheaval brought about by constant foreign invasions, Maratha incursions and revolts of provincial governors. Continuous disturbances made memoir writing either by the governors of provinces or by high officials impracticable. Some personal memoirs were compiled by minor officials during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and such works are often genuine human documents vividly lighting up the atmosphere of social, economic and political conditions of the age. The most notable of them are *Tazkirah Tahmas Khan Miskin* and Nur-ud-din's *Life of Najib-ud-daulah*.

Some writers and poets followed occasionally in the train of invaders with a view to compiling accounts of their master's brave deeds. While doing so they throw a flood of light on the condition of the country. The most important example of this class is Qazi Nur Muhammad's *Jang Namah*, presented in a unique manuscript,—which has unfolded for the first time the full details of the seventh Durrani invasion of 1764-65.

The Marathi newsletters and reports, written by the Peshwas' officials in the Panjab and Delhi, are also of the highest value as showing the other side of the shield. They are profuse in the wealth of details with absolutely correct dates and thus help to fill in the gaps in the existing Persian histories of the period. The letters sent by Antaji Mankeshwar and the Hingne family are indispensable. They have been printed by Parasnis and in the Bombay Government's admirable series of *Selections from the Peshwas' Daftar*, edited by Rao Bahadur G. S. Sardesai.

After the battle of Plassey (1757) the English became masters of Bengal and since then they evinced a keen interest in the affairs of Northern India. Numerous Persian letters were consequently addressed to the British Governor of Fort William by the Hindu and Muslim chiefs of note, and they supply us with valuable information and exact dates. At the time of Durrani campaigns, numer-

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ous messengers were appointed to convey full details about the daily progress of the invader and of other events. Very minute and copious details are available about the last Durrani invasion of 1767. These letters have been translated and published by the Imperial Record Department (now known as the National Archives of India).

A brief survey of all the works used in the compilation of these pages, is given in the Bibliography.

As to the scope of the subject, we may say that this short period of nearly 30 years is fraught with the most important and epoch-making events which ever took place in the history of the Land of the Five Rivers. It witnessed as many as nine foreign invasions from the dreaded Nadir Shah and his general Ahmad Shah Durrani, one Maratha incursion, the gradual but total collapse of Mughal rule in the province, the rapid growth of the newly formed Durrani empire, the life and death struggle of the two most eminent powers of the day, the Durranis and the Marathas, over the spoils of the once mighty empire of the Mughals, the sudden and serious set-back of the Maratha power at Panipat in 1761, and finally the rise of the insignificant Sikhs from nothingness into a sovereign power.

The story told in the following pages, therefore, is on the one hand, one of marchings and countermarchings, and of extremely painful and horrid deeds ever done by man to man; and on the other hand, it is also a wonderful record of the sufferings and hardships endured by the Sikhs in the cause of faith and freedom.

In the compilation of these pages the author has always kept in view the principle of going back to the original. He has made use of all the contemporary materials as well as secondary sources of trust and value, available chiefly in unpublished Persian works and Marathi, Gurmukhi, Urdu, English and French records, mostly unused by any previous writer on the subject. No second-hand authority, however, has been given preference over a contemporary writer. The original authorities, on the other hand, have been subjected to a careful examination as far as possible. No pre-conceived notions have been allowed to interfere in the interpretation of facts. As a consequence of his researches, carried on for full four years, the writer has tried not only to supply a lost chapter of Indian history, but also to correct several prevalent errors and to establish a correct chronology.

The Sikhs seldom wrote their histories and the Hindus did not

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care much to record their doings. The Muslims took rather a prejudiced view of the Sikh deeds which mainly went against them.

Secondly, where old records exist, they are not always made available to the research student. Some of the material is in the possession of persons and Indian States who, for one reason or another, do not like it to be utilized by the student of history.

Then comes the difficult question of interpretation. In cases where complete histories are already available, new materials can be easily utilized; but where the annals are meagre and fragmentary, as in the case of Sikh history in the eighteenth century, the task of the historian is extremely difficult. Moreover most of his authorities are neither printed nor edited. He is expected to correct the wrongly spelt proper names, without having a second manuscript to collate with the one lying before him. Survey maps also fail him in many cases in removing this difficulty, because the places once of note have fallen either into ruin or into insignificance.

Still more formidable was the lack of expert guidance, and so the author was almost entirely thrown on his own resources. There was the minor difficulty of language, too. The materials lie spread over a wide range of languages, Persian, Marathi, Urdu, Hindi, English and French, and it was with some trouble that the writer managed to use the various works written in these languages. In the words of Sir Jadunath Sarkar it is quite proper to say that "to expect perfection in such a branch of study is hardly more reasonable than to ask a goldsmith to give a proof of his professional skill by prospecting for gold, digging the mine, extracting and refining the ore, and then making the ornament."

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In conclusion, it is the author's most pleasant duty to express his feelings of gratitude to his revered teacher, Professor Sita Ram Kohli, the veteran scholar of Sikh history at whose suggestion and with whose valuable assistance he undertook and completed this task. The author owes a heavy debt of obligation to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, for his very kindly permitting him the use of his extremely valuable and rare manuscripts, most of which are either rotographs of British Museum manuscripts or copies of those in the India Office Library. He also generously placed at his disposal all other books he needed including his pencil translations of Father Wendel's *History of the Jats* and many Marathi records. His ungrudging help in discussing some of the topics with the writer proved of

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great use in clearing up many obscure points. His thanks are also due to Professor Sri Ram Sharma of the D. A. V. College, Lahore, for helping him on many occasions; to Principal Jodh Singh of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, for making Nur Muhammad's *Jang Namah* accessible to him, to Bhai Takht Singh of Ferozepur for permission to use the Bhai Dit Singh Library, and to Sardar Hira Singh Dard, Editor of the Phulwari, for lending him a copy of *Prachin Panth Parkash* and the old issues of his own journal.

H. R. GUPTA

February, 1937
LAHORE

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Preface to the Second Edition

Since this book goes forth as a revised edition, it may be pointed out that the entire text has been revised with a view to clarifying its statements and to enriching its factual content. Among the new additions are, section 5, pp. 88-91; section 4, pp. 150-153; section 12, pp. 163-168; section 9, pp. 203-212; section 10, pp. 212-213 and section 16, pp. 282-283; while sections 4 and 5, pp. 200-202 of the first edition are deleted.

H. R. GUPTA

July, 1952
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Preface to the Third Edition

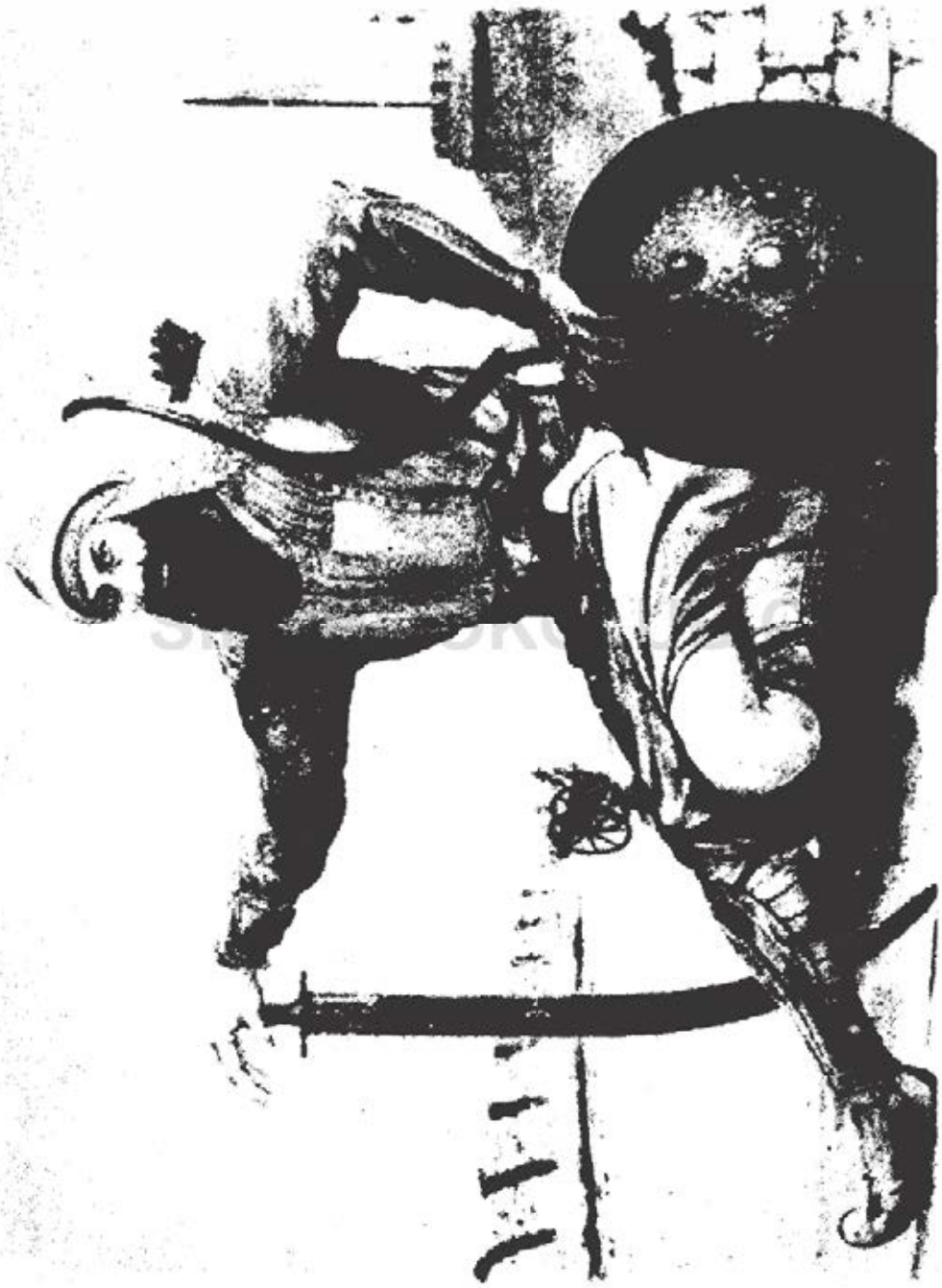
In this edition some changes have been made in the text, and mistakes of facts and figures in the light of recent researches have been corrected. In order to maintain the continuity of the subject with the first volume of the series entitled *The Sikh Gurus*, two new chapters covering the period from 1709 to 1738 have been added. The pages of the old volume 145-148, 214-215, 220-224, 249-258, 273-278, 284-328 have been removed without injuring the proper theme of the content. This matter has been incorporated in the relevant books of this series entitled *Sikh Domination of the Mughal Empire,* and *Sikh Misls close Invaders' Gateways.* Important information given in the footnotes has been included in the body of the book to make the narrative more comprehensive and interesting. Two Chapters on Mughlani Begam and Adina Beg Khan have been added.

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H.R. Gupta

January, 1978
8/78 Panjabi Bagh,
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Banda Bahadur.

[facing p. 1

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CHAPTER 1

First Sikh State Under Banda Bahadur 1709-1715

Banda Bahadur's life sketch

The story goes that Banda's original name was Lachhman Dev. He was born in Kartik 1727 Bikrami Samvat, October-November 1670, four years after the birth of Guru Gobind Singh. He belonged either to Kashmir or Panjab. He was a Rajput cultivator. By the time he was just turned twenty, his astonishing mind was set on its task. He had a reputation of being a great hunter. One day he killed a doe which immediately delivered itself of two cubs which expired in his presence. The sight shocked him. He renounced worldly life and became a Bairagi Sadhu or a wandering hermit and ultimately settled at Nander on the banks of river Godavari in Maharashtra. He won great fame as a sorceror under the name of Madhodas and commanded thousands of followers.

Guru Gobind Singh went to his hermitage. Madhodas was away. The Guru ordered his disciples to kill a few goats of the Bairagi and cook meat there and then. The matter was reported to the Bairagi. The Guru asked him who he was. Madhodas replied, he was Banda or Guru's slave. The Guru enquired, if he knew whom he was talking to. He said he was none other than Guru Gobind Singh. At that time Banda was 38 years old and the Guru was of 42 years. The Guru encouraged him to give up his present way of living and resume the duties of a real Rajput. In a few days the Guru held a durbar, conferred the title of Banda Bahadur on him and appointed him his military lieutenant to punish the Governor of Sarhind who had killed his two youngest sons, and was mainly responsible for the death of his two elder sons, his mother and thousands of Sikhs and Hindus. He was given a council of advisers of five Sikhs who on their arrival in Panjab were to assure the Sikhs that Banda was Guru's nominee and deputy to organise them in order to lead an expedition against Sarhind.

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Banda came to Panjab and was joined by thousands of Sikhs and Hindus. He plundered all the Muslim towns and villages on the way, conquered Sarhind and killed Wazir Khan, its Governor. He appointed Sikh officers in place of Muslims in the Sarhind province lying between the rivers Satluj and Jamuna up to Karnal and Panipat. Then he extended his rule up to river Ravi and occupied the whole of Indian Panjab and Haryana, while the Rajas of Himachal Pradesh became his tributaries. He led expeditions into the Ganga Doab also. He set up his headquarters at Lohgarh, a small fortalice, situated in the lower Shiwalik hills south of Nahan and north-east of Sadhaura, in Nahan district. After five years' rule he was defeated and killed by the Mughal Emperor, Farrukh Siyar.

Now three questions of importance arise: Where was Banda's original home, whether he was known to Guru Gobind Singh before their meeting at Nander, and if Banda was baptised.

Banda's original home

There are a couple of theories about the original home of Banda Bahadur. Most of the historians hold that his birth place was at Rajauri in Punchh district of Kaskmir. Sixty years after Banda, James Browne wrote that he was born in the Jullundur Doab.[1] J.D. Cunningham says, "he was a native of the south of India."[2] The present writer is of the view that Banda belonged to Sarmur State now District of Nahan in Himachal Pradesh. This conclusion is based on the following grounds:

1. Guru Gobind Singh's field of activities had been the region lying between the rivers Satluj and Jamuna. He stayed at Paonta in Nahan district of Himachal Pradesh from 1685 to 1688. The Guru frequently went on hunting expeditions around Paonta as well as in the hilly areas south of Paonta and Nahan. This part of the country surrounded by Paonta, Nahan, Morni, Kalka, Pinjor, Chandi Mandir, Tilokpur below Morni, Tilokpur below Nahan, Kala Am and Mukhlispur was the famous hunting ground for tigers, leopards, bears, wild boars and deer, particularly in winter. Ahmad Shah Abdali hunted tigers and bears here in February 1765. The Governor-Generals from Calcutta came here to hunt. On March 28, 1838 Lord Auckland killed eight tigers near Kala Am in the dry bed of river Markanda in a few hours.

[1]Browne, *India Tracts*, II, 9.
[2]Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, 1955, p. 77.

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Banda was also a mighty hunter. During these hunting excursions the Guru seems to have met Banda many a time. Without any previous acquaintance, the Guru would not have undertaken a long journey of nearly two thousand kilometres and appointed Banda his Deputy on a fortnight's experience at Nander to guide the destiny of his beloved Khalsa.

2. Banda's outward appearance as a Bairagi must have considerably changed due to his long hair and ash-smeared body. The Guru must have recognised him, but to make himself quite sure he enquired who he was. Banda recognised the Guru at once, and replied that he was Guru's slave.

3. Guru Gobind Singh spoke a language which was a mixture of Hindi and Panjabi. Such a language must have been spoken by Banda, otherwise the Sikhs would not have followed him so quickly and Hindus would not have joined him so speedily. Both the Sikhs and the Hindus took him as one of themselves for this reason. This language is still spoken in Ambala district and southern parts of Nahan district even today.

4. Banda's exploits in this region clearly prove that he was familiar with every nook and corner of this tract.

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5. The establishment of his headquarters at Mukhlispur is another proof of Banda's knowledge of this area. Mukhlis Khan, the Governor of Sarhind, often hunted in these jungles. In the heart of a dense forest he built a rest house for himself on the top of a hill in 1677[1] and called it after his own name Mukhlispur. It looked like a small fort. That is why Khafi Khan calls it *Qilachi*.

6. Banda's disappearance into the hills and emergence at Kiratpur in one day indicates his familiarity with the submontane tract of Shiwalik hills.

7. After Banda's escape from this fort in December 1710, Raja Bhup Prakash of Nahan was arrested, put in an iron cage and sent to Delhi. Banda passed through the states of Nahan, Nalagarh Bilaspur, Kangra and Chamba. No action was taken against any other state. It seems clear that the Raja of Nahan was punished not that Banda escaped through his territory, but that Banda was his subject, and it was his duty to apprehend him.

8. Banda's abolition of zamindari system also demonstrates his knowledge of this region. The land there belonged to zamindars under the feudal system. This practice was not confined to Nahan

[1]Bhai Jodh Singh, *Shri Kalgidhar Hulas*, Lahore, 1901, pp. 235-36 (Gurmukhi)

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state but also extended to parts of Ambala district, lying at the foot of Shiwalik hills. There the landlords were mainly Muslims and tenants were mostly Hindu Jats and Gujars.

9. Banda changed the name of Mukhlispur to that of Lohgarh. From here he issued his own coins. In addition to the names of Nanak and Gobind Singh, they bore the words 'Sachcha Sahib.' In the language of this tract 'Sahib' meant God. When a Hindu met a Muslim, he greeted him with 'Sahib Salaam' (Salute to God), and the reply given was 'Sahib ko Salaam.' The Hindus among themselves greeted each other with 'Ram Ram.' Sachcha Sahib therefore meant True Lord God. In his letters and orders Banda used the words 'Sri Sachcha Sahib,' not for himself, but for God and the Guru. The other Gurus after Nanak in their letters wrote their names as Nanak. Banda could not write Nanak as he was not the Guru. He adopted the term of Sachcha Sahib. The word Sahib was chiefly used there.

10. In the battle of Sarhind Sher Muhammad Khan, Nawab of Malerkotla, had fought hard against Banda. The Nawab was killed while fighting. In order to punish the Nawab's family, Banda attacked Malerkotla. To save the town from pillage Kishan Das Banya, an old acquaintance of the Bairagi, came to see him. Banda embraced him. On his recommendation the town was saved on payment of two lakhs of rupees as fine.[1] The shopkeepers of the plains visited Shiwalik hills for the purpose of trade. They exchanged sugar, oil, salt and cloth for the hilly products such as blankets, ginger, turmeric and honey. In some of these visits Kishan Das might have met Banda Bahadur.

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Was Banda baptised by the Guru?

There is no doubt about it that Banda became a disciple of Guru Gobind Singh, but he was not baptised according to his new ceremony of administering *pahul*. It appears that the Guru did so deliberately for certain reasons:

1. Banda was already known as Guru in Maharashtra and he commanded a large following. The Guru did not want to enhance Banda's prestige as a religious leader of the Sikhs.

2. He was over-active and over-energetic (*Bara-Tejdhari*),[2] both

[1]Bhai Parmanand, *Bir Bairagi*, Lahore, 1925, p. 74 (Hindi).

[2]Santokh Singh, *Shri Guru Prakash Suraj Granth*, Uttar Ain Ans, V, p. 361 (Gurmukhi).

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in worldly life as well as in spiritual domain. The Guru was fully familiar with the Masands' role. He had abolished that institution, and was not prepared to create another masand so aggressive and powerful as Banda.

3. By making him a regular Sikh, the Guru feared lest he might claim Guruship in course of time. Without baptism the Khalsa would not accept him as the Guru. This actually happened. Ratan Singh Bhangu and Santokh Singh write that later on Banda declared himself Guru, and the Khalsa rejected his claim. They insisted on his getting himself baptised and taking meat diet.[1]

Bhai Santokh Singh in *Suraj Granth* says: "He was not in accord with the Khalsa. Without the Guru's approval he started his own sect. He did not take baptism of the dagger. He did not adopt the Sikh way of life (keeping five K's). He did not eat meat and drink wine, and did not wear black clothes."[2]

Gian Singh also says that the Guru did not baptise him.[3] Khazan Singh is of the view that "although Banda became his disciple the Guru did not deem it advisable to initiate him with *Pahul*." He further observes: The Guru "selected and deputed Banda Bahadur, not as successor and leader of the Khalsa, but as an avenging agent without admitting him into the Khalsa order with the usual initiation of Amrit baptism."[4]

Kartar Singh Kalaswalia says that the Guru presented Banda at the time of his departure for Panjab with his own special dagger which he always wore around his neck. At this his Khalsa shouted: "We will never allow a non-Khalsa to have it. We will sacrifice our lives after killing him." Further he says Banda "was neither a baptised Sikh nor a *Sahajdhari*."[5]

Karam Singh, the well-known Sikh historian, declares that "although Banda had come within the fold of the Sikhs, he had no time to take *Amrit*."[6]

[1]*Prachin Panth Prakash,* Wazir-e-Hind Press, Amritsar, date of publication not given, pp. 157-58 (Gurmukhi); *Shri Guru Prakash Suraj Granth*, Uttar Ain Ans, VI, p. 362 (Gurmukhi).

[2]*Suraj Prakash*, Uttar Ain Ans. XIII. p. 374.

[3]*Panth Prakash*, p. 325.

[4]*History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, Part I, Chapter XV, pp. 206, 373.

[5]Bhai Kartar Singh Giani Kalaswalia, *Baba Banda Bahadur*, 1924 edition, pp. 50, 207-8, 236-37, (Gurmukhi).

[6]*Jiwan Britant Baba Banda Bahadur*, Chief Khalsa Diwan, pp. 24-28 (Gurmukhi).

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4. Had Banda been baptised, he would not have changed the Guru's salutation of *Wah Guru ji ka Khalsa, Wah Guru ji ki Fatah* to *Fatah Darshan*.

5. In case of his being a regular Sikh, a schism could not have taken place among his followers into Tatva Khalsa and Bandai Sikhs.

6. There are no contemporary or near contemporary sources to establish the fact that Banda had been baptised. All sources quoted in support of this assertion are one hundred years or more later.

Banda invested with temporal authority

At a durbar held at Nander about the middle of September 1708, the Guru conferred the title of Bahadur on Banda and invested him with full political and military authority as his Deputy to carry on the national struggle in the Panjab and to punish Wazir Khan of Sarhind and his supporters. He was supplied with a standard and a drum as symbols of temporal authority. He was given an advisory council of five devoted Khalsa: Baj Singh, a descendant of the family of the third Guru, Amar Das, his brother Ram Singh, Binod Singh, who descended from Guru Angad, his son Kahan Singh and Fatah Singh.[1] Twenty-five Sikh soldiers were given to him as his bodyguard. A rescript called *hukamnamah* or a letter of authority in the handwriting of the Guru instructing the Sikhs to join Banda Bahadur in his national war against Mughal tyranny was provided. As an insignia of his temporal authority invested in him, the Guru gave Banda Bahadur his own sword, green bow and five arrows from his quiver. Three hundred Sikh cavaliers in battle array accompanied Banda to a distance of eight kilometres to give him the final send off.

Banda on his journey, 1708-09

The Guru refused to accompany the Emperor beyond Nander. He had been severely wounded by a Pathan set on the Guru by Wazir Khan with the connivance of the court nobles. The despatch of Banda to the Panjab had infuriated Emperor Bahadur Shah. As a result of his intrigue the Guru passed away on October 7, 1708. Banda had not gone far when he heard the sad news. This

[1]Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, 4th edition, pp. 327-28 (Gurmukhi); *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, I, 352 (Gurmukhi).

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did not discourage him. On the contrary it doubled his zeal and set the fire of vengeance ablaze in his heart. Besides Banda had seen with his own eyes how Tara Bai, a young widow five years younger than he, had set Aurangzeb's teeth on edge from 1700 to 1707. Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes, "During this period the supreme guiding force in Maharashtra was not any minister but the Dowager queen Tara Bai Mohite. Her administrative genius and strength of character saved the nation in that awful crisis that threatened it in consequence of Rajaram's death."[1] He now feared the safety of his own person and his men on account of Emperor's hostility. He wanted to reach Panjab before the Emperor was free from the revolt of his brother Kam Bakhsh at Hyderabad.

Banda seems to have travelled in disguise and by circuitous routes to avoid detection. Generally he adopted the same route across Maharashtra and Rajasthan as was followed by Guru Gobind Singh. The distance between Nander and Hissar in Haryana by that route was 1,600 kms.[2] At the rate of 16 kms or 10 miles a day on an average, Banda should not have taken more than 100 days during his journey, but he actually took about a year. It means that he might have been frequently in hiding. The Emperor should have instructed his officers to make short work of Banda and his party, as this much of diplomacy he could not have ignored. That is why Banda travelled right across Maharashtra and Rajasthan, both of which were in revolt against the Mughals.

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Banda in Haryana, 1709

Narnaul: Banda arrived at Narnaul. There he saw complete destruction of Satnamis with his own eyes. His blood boiled on learning that the entire sect of Satnamis, men, women and children, one and all, had been wiped out of existence. It was here that Banda

[1] *Aurangzib*, V, 200.

[2] Nander to Mandsaur = 857 kms
Mandsaur to Ajmer = 291 "
Ajmer to Phulera = 74 "
Phulera to Ringas = 66 "
Ringas to Sikar = 50 "
Sikar to Churu = 134 "
Churu to Sadulpur = 58 "
Sadulpur to Hissar = 70 "
1600 kms

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made up his mind to retaliate upon Muslims. Here he suppressed some dacoits and robbers.[1]

Bhiwani: At Bhiwani Banda looted the government treasury and distributed it among his followers. This liberality attracted a large number of young men to join him.[2]

Hissar: In Hissar district called the Bagar desh where Banda was in October 1709, he was well received by the Hindus and Sikhs as a leader of the nationalist movement and deputy of Guru Gobind Singh. Liberal offerings were made to him in the cause of the country and dharam (religion and virtue) which he distributed among his followers and the poor and the needy. In this region he took to suppressing dacoits and robbers, seized their booty and gave it to the poor people. Young men of narrow means and dare-devils began to flock under his banners, and the number of his retinue was swelling.[3]

Tohana: Here Banda issued letters to Malwa Sikhs to join him in his crusade against Wazir Khan of Sarhind.

Never perhaps in the history of Panjab did the circumstances of the time offer so fair a field to the ambition of a leader, conscious of great talents, and called to the command of a warlike people, only too eager to support him in any enterprise he might undertake. The Emperor was away in the Deccan, and many of his notable chiefs and commanders had been killed in the recently fought civil war. The Governors of Delhi, Sarhind, Lahore and Jammu acted independently and had no cooperation among themselves. Banda directed his attention to the east towards Delhi. There were two motives behind this move. He wanted to leave Mata Sahib Devi in Delhi and plunder the Government officials and rich Muslims of the fertile areas of Haryana. From Kharkhauda about 50 kms north-west of Delhi, Mata Sahib Devi was sent to Delhi under proper escort, to join Mata Sundari, who was acting as head of the Khalsa. She might have resented Banda's ignoring her for not having visited her at the capital before starting on his crusade.

Sonepat: At Sonepat, 50 kms north of Delhi, early in November 1709 Banda commanded about 500 followers. He attacked the

[1]Banda's arrival at Narnaul and his suppression of lawless people is mentioned by Giani Gian Singh, *Shri Guru Panth Prakash*, 4th edition, 345-46.

[2]Bhai Parmanand, *Bir Bairagi*, Lahore, 1925, p. 56 (Hindi).

[3]ibid, 56.

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government treasury, plundered it and distributed it among his retinue. This was his second success against the government and it considerably raised his prestige. By slow marches he advanced towards Sarhind.

Kaithal: Near Kaithal, about 100 kms farther north, Banda seized a government treasury which was on its way from the northern districts to Delhi. He kept nothing out of it for himself and gave it away to his rank and file.

Samana: Samana, 50 kms farther north was the native place of Jalal-ud-din Jallad, the professional executioner, who had beheaded Guru Tegh Bahadur, while his son had beheaded the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh. Ali Husain who by false promises had lured Guru Gobind Singh to evacuate Anandpur also belonged to Samana. It was an accursed place in the eyes of the Sikhs. The entire peasantry of the neighbourhood was now up in arms, and Banda's following had risen to several thousands. Banda fell upon the town on November 26, 1709. The inhabitants were massacred in cold blood and the town was thoroughly squeezed.[1] Samana was the district town and had nine parganahs attached to it. It was placed under charge of Fatah Singh. Samana was the first territorial conquest and the first administrative unit of Banda. A large quantity of gold, arms and ammunition fell into his hands, while everybody fighting under him became rich and prosperous.[2] Fatah Singh was given a body of troopers to maintain peace and order.

Other Muslim Towns: Kunjpura, Ghuram and Thaska, inhabited by Muslim Ranghars, notorious for rape and rapine, were destroyed next.[3] Damla was the village of those Pathans who had deserted Guru Gobind Singh in the battle of Bhangani. It was ravaged.[4] Shahabad Markanda, 25 kms south of Ambala, a Muslim town, fell Banda's victim. Mustafabad, 40 kms south-west of Ambala, was laid waste. The Nawab of Kapuri who was lewd and lustful was killed and his fort was razed to the ground.

Sadhaura: Usman Khan, the chief of Sadhaura, 25 kms distant, had persecuted Sayyid Budhu Shah for helping Guru Gobind Singh in the battle of Bhangani. The Muslim population maltreated the local Hindus. On the approach of Banda the leading Muslims

[1] *Phulkian States Gazetteer*, 1904, p. 205.
[2] Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, pp. 350-51.
[3] ibid, 353.
[4] ibid.

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gathered in a big and strongly built mansion. They were all massacred. This building came to be called Qatal Garhi.[1] Banda attacked the town and destroyed it.

The contemporary historian Khafi Khan wrote: "In two or three months' time, four to five thousand pony-riders, and seven to eight thousand warlike footmen joined him. Day by day their number increased, and abundant money and material by pillage fell into their hands. Soon eighteen to nineteen thousand men in arms under him raised aloft the standard of plunder and persecution."[2] Further on he says: "Numerous villages were laid waste, and he appointed his own police officers (*thanedars*) and collectors of revenue (*tahsildar-e-mal*)."[3]

Lohgarh: The ultimate aim of Banda was to punish Wazir Khan and conquer Sarhind. It required time to consolidate his material and territorial gains. He also wanted to study the military resources of Sarhind. He was anxious to see what steps the Government would take against him. He therefore established his headquarters, in the beginning of February 1710, at Mukhlispur situated in lower Shiwalik hills south of Nahan, about 20 kms from Sadhaura. Its fort stood on a hill top. Two *kuhls* or water channels flowed at its base and supplied water to it. This fort was repaired and put in a state of defence. All the money, gold and costly material acquired in these expeditions were deposited here. He struck coins and issued orders under his own seal. The name of Mukhlispur was changed to Lohgarh, and it became the capital of the first Sikh State. "Although he declared himself as the slave of the Guru, yet the Khalsa looked upon him as the Guru and became his followers."[4]

Banda ruled over the region bounded on the north by the Shiwalik hills, on the west by river Tangri, on the east by river Jamuna, and in the south by a line passing through Samana, Thanesar, Kaithal and Karnal. He abolished the Zamindari system of land tenure prevailing under the Mughals and declared the actual cultivators as the owners of land. Thus he established the peasant proprietorship, and won the approbation and support of the overwhelming majority of the population. Khafi Khan says that Banda "issued orders to imperial officers and agents and big jagirdars to submit and give

[1]Khafi Khan, II, 660; Gian Singh, 355-57.
[2]*Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, II, 652.
[3]ibid.
[4]*Chahar Gulshan-e-Panjab* (Persian MS.), 188.

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up their business."[1] So Guru Gobind Singh's dream of political sovereignty was realized within a year of his death.

Banda's name struck terror into the hearts of lawless people, and thefts and brigandage became a thing of the past. "In all the parganahs occupied by the Sikhs," writes Irvine, "the reversal of the previous customs was striking and complete. A low scavenger or leather dresser, the lowest of the low in Indian estimation, had only to leave home and join the Guru, when in a short time he would return to his birthplace as its ruler with his order of appointment in his hand. As soon as he set foot within the boundaries, the well-born and wealthy went out to greet him and escort him home. Arrived there, they stood before him with joined palms awaiting his orders... Not a soul dared to disobey an order, and men who had often risked themselves in battlefields, became so cowed down that they were afraid even to remonstrate. Hindus who had not joined the sect were not exempt from these."[2]

Banda's troops

Banda devoted three months in organizing his civil and military administration. Bahadur Shah was still away from Delhi. The Delhi Government had made no attempt to recover their lost territory from him. Wazir Khan of Sarhind was making his own preparations independently to meet the danger from Banda.

Banda's troops consisted of two classes of people. The old Sikhs who had fought under Guru Gobind Singh joined him purely to punish Wazir Khan. They also wished to see the fulfilment of the Guru's prophecy for Sikh sovereignty in Panjab. They numbered about five thousands. Another class of Sikhs of about the same number comprised young men who wanted to punish and plunder the enemies of their faith. The third group of Hindu Jats, Gujars and Rajputs, about ten thousands in number were intent on plunder alone. Most of them were untrained, raw levies, not fully armed. Banda possessed no elephants, no good horses and no guns. His followers had matchlocks, swords, spears, bows and arrows. According to Khafi Khan the number of Sikhs had risen to thirty or forty thousands.[3]

[1] *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, II, 652-53.
[2] *Later Mughals*, I, 98-99.
[3] *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, II, 652-53.

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Wazir Khan's preparations

Wazir Khan had proclaimed a *jihad* or a holy war against Banda. He was joined by the Nawab of Malerkotla, all other Muslim chiefs and jagirdars as well as by Ranghars in large numbers. His men were fully equipped with fine, up-to-date arms. Majority of his soldiers were trained men. Wazir Khan's own troops were "five or six thousand horse and seven or eight thousand musketeers (*barqandaz*) and archers, and with these, some artillery and elephants." In addition there were about eight thousand *ghazis*. The total number of his troops was about twenty thousands.

Banda advanced from Lohgarh and halted at Banur, near Ambala, 14 kms from Rajpura. The Muslims of that town used to seize cows and oxen of Hindus and slaughter them in their presence. Banda sacked it, and then went ahead towards Sarhind.

On hearing the news of Banda's advance, the Sikhs of the Jullundur and Bari Doabs gathered at Kiratpur to join his forces. Their passage was barred near Rupar by Sher Muhammad Khan of Malerkotla. He was defeated. They met Banda between Banur and Kharar on the road leading from Ambala to Rupar.[1]

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The battle of Sarhind, May 12, 1710

The battle was fought at Chhappar Chiri,[2] 20 kms from Sarhind on May 12, 1710. On the Mughal side Sher Muhammad Khan, Nawab of Malerkotla, was the leader of the right wing. Wazir Khan was in command of the centre. Suchanand, chief secretary of the Nawab, was put on the left. On the Sikh side, Baj Singh headed the right flank and Binod Singh the left flank, while Banda commanded the centre facing Wazir Khan. Shouts of *Sachcha Padishah*, *Fatah Darshan*, *Akal*, *Akal* and *Ya Ali*, *Ya Ali*, rent the sky.[3] Suchanand could not withstand the ferocity of Baj Singh. He was soon vanquished and fled away. The artillery fire of the Mughals told heavily on the plunderers in Banda's camp. They were equally divided between the forces of Banda and Binod, and they took to flight. Sher Muhammad was about to overpower Binod Singh's wing when he was suddenly struck by a bullet and was instantly killed. His men immediately dispersed. Wazir Khan

[1]Khafi Khan, II, 653; Elliot, VII, 414.

[2]Macauliffe, V, 247-48; Latif, *Panjab*, 274. This name is mentioned by Mir Muhammad Ahsan Ijad of Samana who compiled his *Shah Namah* in 1719.

[3]Khafi Khan, in Elliot & Dowson, VII, 414.

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was rushing upon Banda who stuck fast to his ground and discharged arrows relentlessly. There a bloody battle was going on. Baj Singh and Binod Singh now joined Banda. Banda and the Sikh leaders now converged around Wazir Khan, who was killed.

Wazir Khan's death is variously described. Khafi Khan says that he was struck by a musket ball.[1] Mir Muhammad Ahsan Ijad says that Baj Singh rushed upon Wazir Khan. The Governor threw his spear at him. Baj Singh caught hold of it. He flung the same spear upon Wazir Khan. It struck the forehead of his horse. Wazir Khan discharged an arrow which hit Baj Singh's arm. He then rushed upon him with his sword. At this juncture Fatah Singh came to the rescue of Baj Singh. His sword cut the Khan from shoulder to the waist.[2]

Akhbarat-e-Durbar-e-Mualla dated May 13, 1710 stated that the battle began in the morning and lasted until afternoon. Wazir Khan was wounded by arrows and bullets and fell dead. His son and son-in-law also perished.[3]

Latif writes that he was killed by an arrow which pierced his breast.[4] Kanhiyalal says he was struck by a bullet in breast.[5] Macauliffe holds that his head was cut off by Banda himself in a scuffle.[6]

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Pursuit of fugitives

Wazir Khan's head was stuck up on a spear and lifted high up by a Sikh who took his seat in the deceased's howdah. The Sikhs with one voice and in a wild excitement raised the sky-rending shouts of *Sat Sri Akal*. The Muslim troops on beholding the Nawab's head took alarm, and trembling fled helter skelter in dismay and despair. The Sikhs fell upon them and there was a terrible carnage. Blood flowed freely not only in the battlefield but on a wide tract up to the city of Sarhind, 20 kms distant. Wazir Khan's body was dragged by oxen and was then burnt.[7] Khafi Khan writes that in the course of flight "not a man of the army of Islam escaped with more than his life and the clothes he stood in. Horsemen and foot-

[1]Khafi Khan, II, 653; Elliot, VII, 414; Irvine, I, 96.
[2]Mir Muhammad Ahsan Ijad, *Shah Namah*, quoted by Karam Singh, 30.
[3]Ganda Singh, *Makhiz-e-Twarikh-e-Sikhan*, I, 85.
[4]*History of the Panjab*, 274.
[5]Kanhiyalal, *Tarikh-e-Panjab*, 1886, p. 59 (Urdu).
[6]*Sikh Religion*, V, 248.
[7]Yar Muhammad, *Dastur-ul-Insha* (Persian MS.), quoted by Karam Singh, 46.

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men fell under the swords of the infidels who pursued them as far as Sarhind."[1]

The city of Sarhind

The Sikhs reached Sarhind by nightfall. The gates of the city were closed. The guns mounted on the walls of the fort commenced bombardment. The Sikhs laid siege to the place. They took rest in the night and gained strength for another trial the following day. Wazir Khan's family and the Muslim nobles fled to Delhi at night.

Severe fighting took place on May 13, 1710. The fort guns caused great havoc among Sikhs, and about 500 of them lost their lives. The Sikhs in knots were hammering at the gates, and the Mughal gunners obviously were playing a losing game. By afternoon they succeeded in breaking open a couple of gates, and Banda's troops entered the town. Inside the town destruction of life and property knew no bounds. Whole families were wiped out of existence. Every follower of Banda seized as much in cash and kind as much he could carry home. The Government treasury and moveable property worth two crores fell into the hands of Banda and it was removed to Lohgarh. Several Muslims of note saved their lives by embracing Sikhism. Dindar Khan son of Jalal Khan Rohilla became Dindar Singh. The official newswriter of Sarhind Mir Nasir-ud-din changed his name to Mir Nasir Singh.[2]

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The province of Sarhind occupied

The entire province of Sarhind consisting of twenty-eight parganahs and extending from the Satluj to the Jamuna and from the Shiwalik hills to Kunjpura, Karnal and Kaithal, yielding 52 lakhs annually (Bawani Sarhind) came into Banda's possession. Baj Singh was appointed Governor of Sarhind. Ali Singh was made his deputy. Their chief responsibility was to be on guard against the Mughal troops from Lahore and Jammu. Fatah Singh retained charge of Samana. Ram Singh, brother of Baj Singh, became chief of Thanesar. Binod Singh, in addition to his post of the revenue minister, was entrusted with the administration of Karnal and Panipat. His main duty was to guard the road from Delhi. Banda retired to his capital at Lohgarh. His era began from May 12, 1710, the date of

[1]Khafi Khan, II, 654; Elliot, VII, 415.

[2]Yar Muhammad, *Dastur-ul-Insha*, quoted by Karam Singh, 37 (Persian MS.)

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his victory in the battle of Sarhind. The zamindari system was abolished in the whole province at one stroke.[1]

Banda advances towards Lahore, June 1710

Having set up the administrative machinery, Banda advanced from Sarhind to Malerkotla to punish the family of Sher Muhammad Khan. The town was saved for a ransom of two lakhs on the recommendation of Kishan Das Banya, an old acquaintance of Banda. From there he marched to Morinda. He chastized the Brahmins and Ranghars who had made over Guru Gobind Singh's mother and his two youngest sons to Wazir Khan. Then he visited Kiratpur and Anandpur to pay homage at the holy shrines. He took Hoshiarpur and Jullundur and carried fire and sword everywhere. Banda crossed the Beas and fell upon Batala. Shaikh-ul-Ahad, a leading Muslim chief and theologian, was killed. Several other places including Kalanaur were captured.[2] He went on a pilgrimage to Derah Baba Nanak. At Amritsar Banda made large offerings. He invited young men to embrace Sikhism promising remission of land revenue and other rewards. Thereupon the people of Majha joined the Khalsa.[3]

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Banda marched to Lahore. Sayyid Islam Khan, the Governor, mounted guns on the walls of the city. He was joined by all the Muslims of the neighbourhood. A fierce action took place at a distance from the city. Thousands were killed on both sides. The Muslims were defeated. They assembled the next day, "but were again defeated with great slaughter."[4] Lahore must have fallen, but Banda was in a hurry to look after his Government.

Thus the city remained safe owing to its strong fortifications. But the entire suburbs for miles around were completely devastated. In this campaign Banda was joined by thousands of low-caste Hindus.[5]

Banda in the Upper Ganga Doab, July 1710

Banda returned to Sarhind, toured over the province to see that the administration was going on well. Then he returned to Lohgrah. In the course of his excursions tales of bigotry of the Muslims of

[1]Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, 363-70.
[2]Latif, *Panjab*, 1964, p. 275.
[3]Yar Muhammad, *Dastur-ul-Insha*, in Karam Singh, 48.
[4]Latif, *Panjab*, 275-76.
[5]Khafi Khan in Elliot and Dowson, VII, 419; Latif, *Panjab*, 276.

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the Upper Ganga Doab were brought to his notice. He lost no time, and crossed the river Jamuna at Rajghat near Buria and entered the district of Saharanpur. He punished and plundered the people of Saharanpur, Behat, Nanautah and Jalalabad. The people submitted after a tough resistance. Thus Banda's rule extended from the river Ravi to the Ganga, and from the neighbourhood of Lahore to the vicinity of Panipat.[1]

The Haidari Flag, September-October 1710

Immediately on his return, the Muslims of Lahore district and its vicinity declared a holy war against the Sikhs. Thousands of Muslims gathered under a huge standard with a green flag, called *Haidari Jhanda*, to crush the Sikh revolt. The Sikhs assembled under their local leaders in self-defence. Three main battles were fought at Qaila Bhagwant Rae, not far from Lahore, Kotla Begam near Chamyari and Bhilowal. The Muslims were defeated and dispersed.[2]

The battle of Rahon, October-November 1710

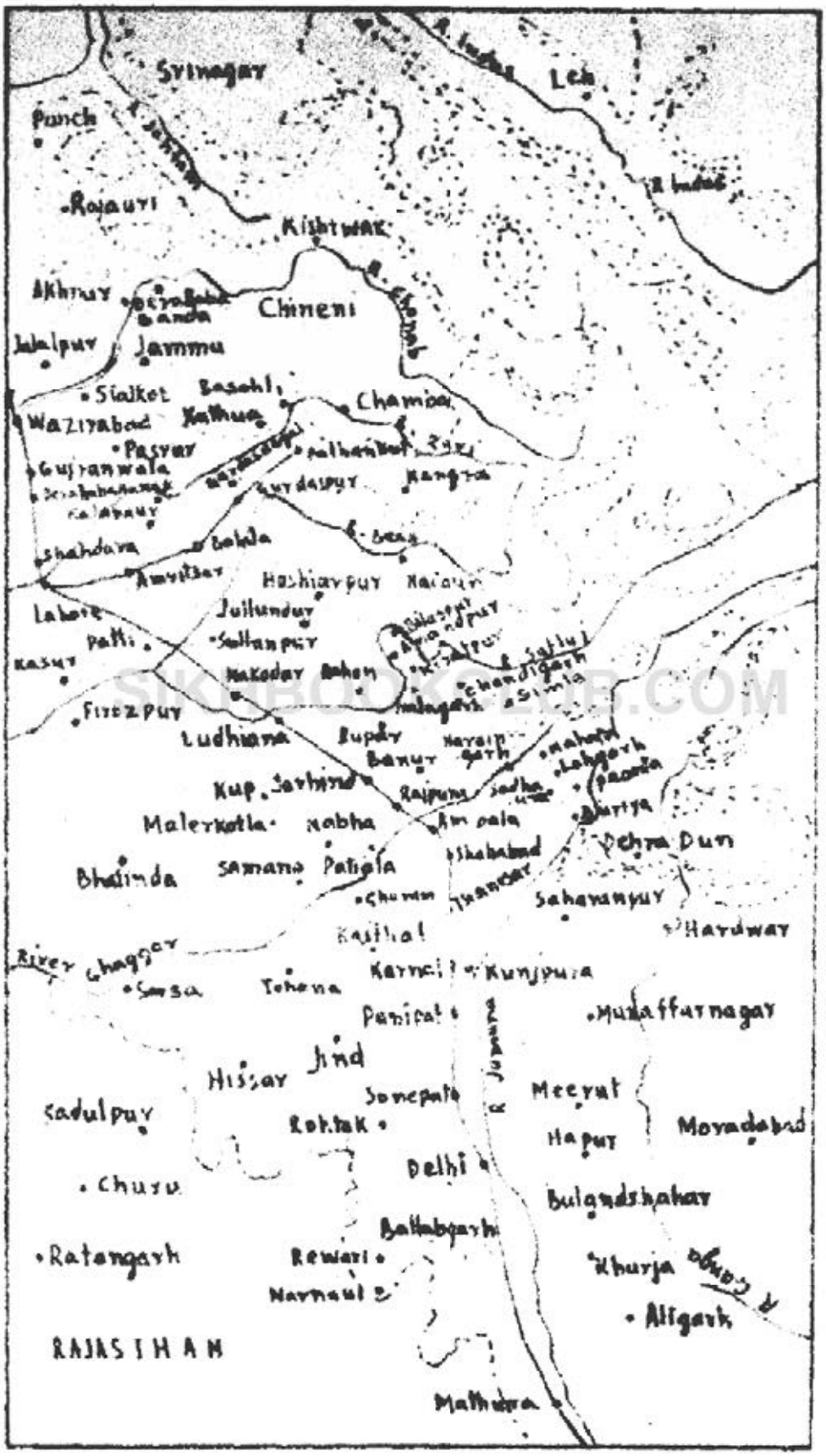
The Sikhs fell back. They captured Rahon situated on a high mound near the Satluj in the Jullundur Doab. Shams Khan, faujdar of the Jullundur Doab, had his headquarters at Sultanpur Lodi. At the head of 5,000 men he marched against the Sikhs. There were no provisions in the fort of Rahon. They left the fort and came out to oppose Shams Khan. A hard battle was fought in Yaqub Khan's garden. Shams Khan was joined by his uncle Bayazid Khan, Governor of Jammu. Umar Khan, an Afghan chief of Kasur, also united with them. A tough fight followed. The Sikhs held together for a few days. Finding the situation untenable they entered Rahon in the night. The place was immediately besieged. They stood their ground for some time, eating whatever could be had from the deserted houses. The fort fell in November and the Sikhs were driven away.[3] Shams Khan then advanced upon Sarhind. Baj Singh and Ali Singh were defeated. They fled away to Lohgarh. Shams Khan occupied Sarhind and killed a number of Sikhs.

[1]Khafi Khan, II, 654-57.

[2]Muhammad Qasim Lahori, *Ibrat Namah*, in Karam Singh, 32.

[3]*Maasir-ul-Umara*, III, 127; Khafi Khan, II, 651-60; Elliot & Dowson, VII, 417-19; Karam Singh, 86-7.

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Bahadur Shah marches against Banda

Emperor Bahadur Shah had defeated and killed his only surviving brother Kam Bakhsh in January 1709. He remained in the Deccan for about a year to establish his own administration. Meanwhile several Rajput princes had revolted in Rajasthan. Bahadur Shah came there in May 1710. At Ajmer he got the news of Sikh rebellion in Panjab. He hurriedly settled terms with the Rajputs and left for Panjab towards the close of June 1710.

Several Hindu chiefs such as Chatarsal Bundela[1] and Udet Singh Bundela followed in his train. The Governors of Allahabad, Lucknow, Moradabad, Delhi and Sayyid Abdullah of Barah Sadat in Muzaffarnagar district were ordered to join him.[2]

In July 1710 the Emperor appointed Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan Governor of Sarhind. In August 1710 Firoz Khan Mewati was placed in command of the advance-guard. Muhammad Amin Khan,[3] Governor of Moradabad, with his son Qamar-ud-din Khan (both of whom became prime ministers of Delhi later on) joined the Emperor in Haryana. Another force under Sayyid Wajih-ud-din Khan of Barah Sadat was sent to reinforce Firoz Khan Mewati. By a proclamation ingress into and egress from Delhi was strictly forbidden. Kokaltash Khan was given charge of Sonepat.

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Early in September 1710 all the Hindus in the camp were clean shaved to avoid any resemblance with the Sikhs. Muslim chiefs and jagirdars joined the imperial forces on their way. Churaman Jat of Bharatpur reported himself on duty in the royal camp near Delhi.

The Emperor was so much worried that he did not enter his capital and marched straight to Sonepat in the last week of October. Here he learnt the news of a couple of engagements with the Sikhs. Firoz Khan Mewati had fought an action with Binod Singh at Amin, 24 kms north of Karnal, and he presented 300 Sikh heads to the Emperor at Sonepat. He was given one lakh of rupees and appointed Governor of Sarhind in supersession of his previous orders for the appointment of Zain-ud-din Khan.[4] Firoz Khan

[1] *Maasir-ul-Umara*, II, 512.

[2] Muhammad Hadi Kamwar Khan, present in the campaign, *Tazkirat-ul-Salatin Chughtaiya*, quoted by Karam Singh in *Banda Bahadur Kaun Tha*, 24-5 (Urdu).

[3] Khafi Khan, II, 669; Elliot and Dowson, VII, 423.

[4] ibid, Kamwar Khan, quoted by Karam Singh, 25.

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Mewati fought two more battles against Binod Singh and Ram Singh at Traori and Thanesar, defeated them and established his own military posts there. Hundreds of Sikh heads with their long flowing hair were hung up on trees all along the road. He then advanced to Shahabad, and captured it.

In November 1710 the Emperor passed through Panipat, Karnal, Thanesar and Shahabad. He encamped at Barara. In one month he covered a distance of 150 kms. In the beginning of December 1710 he reached Sadhaura which became the base of his operations. There the Emperor received 300 Sikh heads sent by Shams Khan from Sarhind. Firoz Khan Mewati was ordered to restore Emperor's authority in the rural areas.

Clashes with Imperial forces

Bahadur Shah planned to advance upon Banda's stronghold at Lohgarh. The Imperial forces were terror-stricken (*tars-o-harās*).[1] "According to the popular voice," writes Irvine, "he was a most powerful magician, greater even than he who made a calf to talk; he could turn a bullet from its course and could work such spells that spear and sword had little or no effect upon his followers. Owing to those idle rumours the Emperor and the nobles and the soldiers were much disturbed in mind and were disheartened. The Sikhs, on the other hand, were encouraged by the belief instilled into them by Banda that all who lost their lives in this war would be recreated at once in a higher rank."[2]

A strong Mughal force under Rustamdil Khan advanced from their base at Sadhaura towards Lohgarh to examine the position of Banda's defences. At a distance of 5 kms they were suddenly attacked by Banda's troops. Khafi Khan writes: "It is impossible for me to describe the fight which followed. The Sikhs in their *faqir* dress struck terror into the royal troops. The number of the dead and dying of the Imperialists was so large that, for a time, it seemed they were losing ground. A nephew of Firoz Khan Mewati was killed and his son wounded."[3] In the battle Banda lost 1,500 Sikhs and two Sardars.[4] Banda cut off convoys and other detachments, and killed two or three faujdars. It rained for four or five

[1]Khafi Khan, II, 669.

[2]*Later Mughals*, I, 111; Khafi Khan, II, 671; Elliot and Dowson, VII, 423.

[3]*Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, II, 669-70; Elliot and Dowson, VII, 423-24.

[4]Kamwar Khan, quoted by Karam Singh, 26.

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days and weather became very cold. Thousands of soldiers fell ill and many horses died. Their stench was unbearable. The soldiers attributed this calamity to the sorcery of Banda.

Another big contingent under command of Emperor's son Prince Rafi-us-Shan, was ordered to reinforce Rustamdil Khan. Kamwar Khan in his *Tazkirat-ul-Salatin* writes: "This humble person was then present with the troops of Prince Rafi-us-Shan, and saw with his own eyes that everyone of the cursed Sikhs came out of the entrenchments, challenged the Imperial troops, and after great struggle and trial, fell under the swords of the *Ghazis*."[1] Rustamdil Khan was raised to the *mansab* of 4,000 *Zat* and 3,000 *Sawar* with the title of Ghazi Khan Rustam-e-Jang.

The siege of Lohgarh

Rustamdil Khan made a farther advance by 4 kms, and reached the stream Som. From there the fort of Lohgarh was visible. It was perched on the top of a hill. Between the stream Som and Lohgarh lay a dense forest. It produced frightful sounds at night. The imperial camp arrived there on December 9, 1710. The prime minister Munim Khan and his son Mahabat Khan were assigned the duty to guard the royal camp.

The following day on December 10, 1710, the Imperial army, 60,000 strong, pushed forward in battle array so as to surround the fort of Lohgarh on all sides. Wazir Munim Khan, his son Mahabat Khan and Chatarsal Bundela were in charge of the right wing. Udet Singh Bundela and Churaman Jat commanded the left wing. Rustamdil Khan was in the centre. When they reached within range of the Sikh guns, they were heavily shelled. The Mughal troops entered the trenches at the foot of the hill. The Sikhs fought hard, but they were repulsed. The survivors retreated up the hill. Large numbers of Muslims were also killed.[2]

The fort of Lohgarh was small. There was no space for storing large quantities of grain and fodder. Their supplies had run short. "The infidels bought what they could from the grain-dealers with the royal army, and pulled it up with ropes."[3] In this exigency Banda decided to escape. A Sikh Gulab Singh by name, a Khatri and formerly a tobacco-seller, had a great resemblance with Banda

[1]Kamwar Khan, 153a; quoted by Ganda Singh, in *Banda Singh Bahadur* ,137.
[2]Khafi Khan, II, 671-72.
[3]Khafi Khan, in Elliot and Dowson, VII, 424.

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Bahadur. He put on Banda's clothes and took up position in his place. At 3 o'clock in the morning on December 11, 1710, a hollow trunk of a big tamarind tree lying in the lower parts of the hill was filled with gunpowder. The guns in the fort were also kept ready to fire simultaneously. Just when the gunpowder in the tree trunk was blown off and the guns in the fort fired, Banda and his men escaped in the great confusion prevailing in the Mughal camp. They safely disappeared into the Sarmur hills.[1]

From Sarmur right across lower parts of the Shiwalik hills, Banda passed through Hindur (Nalagarh), Kahlur (Bilaspur), Kutlehr, Jaswan, Siba and Nurpur, to Chamba.

With the sunrise on December 11, 1710, the imperialists delivered a vehement assault on the fort. Gulab Singh and his companions kept on firing from the fort. The Mughal troopers continued climbing up the hill. Gulab Singh and thirty of his companions were captured. A number of women and children of the neighbouring village had taken up shelter in the Sikh fort. They were taken prisoners. The booty in the fort comprised many horses and camels, five elephants, three big guns, seventeen light guns, a few muskets and swords, a canopy with silver poles, gold and silver coins worth eight lakhs of rupees, and from underground gold coins to the value of twenty lakhs of rupees.[2]

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There were great rejoicings in the Imperial camp. On December 12, 1710 a great durbar was held, and various honours were conferred on all the commanders. In the evening it was discovered that the real Banda had escaped and that it was his duplicate who had been captured. According to Khafi Khan "the hawk had flown and an owl had been caught."[3] All were thoroughly disappointed. The Mughal camp wore a mourning appearance. The Emperor summoned Prime Minister Munim Khan and administered to him a sharp rebuke. The Wazir took the insult to heart, fell ill, and died two and a half months afterwards, when the Emperor was halting at Badhauli not far from Sadhaura on his way to Lahore.[4]

On December 13, a contingent of Mughal troops was despatched to seize the Barfi[5] Raja of Nahan, Bhup Prakash, whose younger

[1]Khafi Khan in Elliot and Dowson, VII, 424.

[2]Kamwar Khan in Karam Singh, 27; Khafi Khan, II, 672-73; Ganda Singh, 144-49.

[3]Elliot and Dowson, VII, 424.

[4]*Tarikh-e-Iradat Khan*, in Elliot and Dowson, VII, 555-56.

[5]*Sirmur State Gazettee* 1904, Part A, p. 14, f.n. 2.

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brother had been offered the *gaddi* by Aurangzeb if he would embrace Islam. The Raja was seized. He and Gulab Singh, Banda's substitute, were both put in an iron cage, sent to Delhi and imprisoned in the Red Fort.[1] Gulab Singh's thirty companions were beheaded. Muhammad Khan came from Sarhind and presented to the Emperor six cartloads of Sikh heads.[2]

It was the duty of the Raja of Nahan to supply ice in summer to the Imperial capital. In winter ice was stored in pits at the foot of hills. In hot weather it was carried wrapped in thick blankets by porters to Dhamras on the river Yamuna. There it was packed in boxes and floated down the river in rafts to Daryapur near Khizarabad in Ambala district. At this place it was loaded in boats and reached Delhi in three days.

Banda at Kiratpur, December 12, 1710

One day after his escape from Lohgarh Banda arrived at Kiratpur. On December 12, 1710 he addressed a number of letters to various centres of Sikhs inviting them to gather at Anandpur immediately. One of such letters was addressed to the Sangat at Jaunpur in U.P. It is reproduced below:

One God! Victory to the Sect![3]

This is the order of Sri Sachcha Sahib to the entire Khalsa of Jaunpur. The Guru will protect you. Call upon the Guru's name. Your lives will be fruitful. You are the Khalsa of great Immortal God. On seeing this letter repair to the presence, wearing five arms. Observe the rules of conduct laid down for the Khalsa. Do not use bhang, tobacco, poppy, wine, or any other intoxicant...

Commit no theft or adultery. We have brought about the golden age (*Satyuga*). Love one another. This is my wish. He who lives according to the rules of the Khalsa shall be saved by the Guru. Poh 12 Samvat 1."[4]

From Kiratpur Banda went to Anandpur, and passing through the hills reached Chamba. Raja Udai Singh offered Banda a princess "a supremely beautiful girl. She had large eyes, her limbs were

[1]Elliot and Dowson, VII, 425.

[2]Khafi Khan, II, 673-74; Elliot and Dowson, VII, 424-25.

[3]*Ik Onkar, Fatah Darshan.*

[4]Ishwar Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh Birthday Souvenir*, 1967, Takht Harimandirji, Patna Sahib, p. 19; Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, 153-54.

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graceful and delicate, and she is described by the enthusiastic chronicler as the very image of the goddess of love."[1]

Bahadur Shah died, February 28, 1712

The Emperor marched in pursuit of Banda. Passing through Sadhaura, Sarwarpur, Rasulpur and Badhauli, where his prime minister Munim Khan passed away, he reached Rupar on April 30, 1710. He crossed the Satluj on May 17, 1711, and reached Hoshiarpur on June 9, 1711. The river Beas was crossed on June 23. He arrived at Kahnuwan on July 17 where he enjoyed hunting water fowls. He reached Lahore on August 11, 1711. Some time afterwards the Emperor developed signs of insanity and died on February 28, 1712.

The battle of Raipur-Bahrampur, November 1711

Banda came out of the hills in September 1711. He seized Pathankot and Gurdaspur. At the latter place he built a fort and collected stores of munition, grain and fodder. In November Qutb-ud-din Khan Kheshgi, faujdar of Jammu, advanced to oppose him. Banda was then subjugating the country in the neighbourhood of Batala and Kalanaur. Qutb-ud-din lay encamped 40 kms to the north. His nephew Shams Khan proceeded from Sultanpur to join his uncle. Both the chiefs attacked Banda near Raipur-Bahrampur. In a severe scuffle the Sikhs took to their heels. Shams Khan issued out in their pursuit. Qutb-ud-din tried his best to prevent him, but he did not care. The Sikhs suddenly came to a halt, and engaged the Afghans in a fiercely contested battle. Shams Khan was shot dead, while Qutb-ud-din was seriously wounded. He fell unconscious and died after three days.[2]

Kalanaur and Batala

Banda marched upon Batala. Shaikh Muhammad Daim, the faujdar of Batala opposed the Sikhs. He was defeated and he fled away to Lahore. Kalanaur and Santokhgarh fell immediately afterwards.[3] Two Mughal generals, Muhammad Amin Khan and Rustamdil Khan issued in pursuit of Banda. He at once crossed river Ravi. The

[1]Macauliffe, V, 248-49.
[2]*Maasir-ul-Umara*, III, 129-30.
[3]Latif, *Panjab*, 278.

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Mughal forces pursued Banda. In the battle of Pasrur the Mughals were victorious, and Banda fled away towards Jammu.

Muhammad Amin Khan and Rustamdil Khan maintained pursuit of Banda. In other engagements fought at Parol 24 kms north-west of Pathankot and at Kathua 11 kms east of Parol he was again repulsed. Rustamdil Khan committed terrible atrocities on the people of Parol—Kathua. He captured young men and women and brought them to Lahore for sale in the slave market.[1]

Muhammad Amin Khan advanced to Jammu, fought a battle with Banda and sent 500 Sikh heads to Lahore.[2] Banda penetrated into the hills and rested on the bank of river Chenab, 75 kms from Jammu. The place came to be called Derah Baba Banda.

Banda recovers Sarhind and Lohgarh, March 1712

On the death of Bahadur Shah a civil war occurred among his sons at Lahore on March 14-17, 1712. The Mughal governors joined one side or the other. Eventually the eldest son Jahandar Shah came out successful.

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Banda took advantage of the situation. He appeared into the plains early in March 1712. Islam Khan, Governor of Lahore, marched to check Banda's advance. In a pitched battle Islam Khan was repulsed and he returned to the capital to participate in the contest for the throne among princes.

Banda advanced upon Sarhind. Bayazid Khan, the Governor, opposed him, but he was not successful. After the battle the Governor retired into his tent. A Sikh entered his tent at night and severed his head. Sarhind again fell into Banda's hands. Having appointed Sikh officers Banda took up his position at Lohgarh.[3]

Lohgarh besieged

Jahandar Shah ordered Amin Khan to seize Banda. He besieged Lohgarh, but failed to capture the Sikh leader. When the Emperor was going to Agra to suppress the revolt of Farrukh Siyar, son of his younger brother Azim-us-Shan, he called Amin Khan to join him. Jahandar Shah was defeated and killed on February 11, 1713. Farrukh Siyar became the Emperor.

The new Emperor immediately turned his attention to suppress

[1]Irvine, *Later Mughals*, I, 119.
[2]Latif, *Lahore*, 70.
[3]Latif, *Panjab*, 278.

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the Sikh revolt. On February 22, 1713 Farrukh Siyar transferred Abdus Samad Khan Diler Jang from Kashmir to Panjab, while his youthful son Zakariya Khan was appointed faujdar of Jammu. Zabardast Khan was given Kashmir. Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan was made in charge of Sarhind. Strict orders were issued to all of them to put an end to the Sikh revolt and capture Banda.[1] Abdus Samad Khan and Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan encamped at Sadhaura in April 1713 and commenced fighting with the Sikhs. The Sikhs fought so ferociously that the Mughal army was almost overpowered. According to Khafi Khan "They over and over again showed the greatest daring." He again repeats that the Sikhs "showed the greatest boldness and daring, and made nocturnal attacks upon the Imperial forces." He further emphasizes that "the enemy exhibited great courage and daring."[2] Banda held his ground for six months. When he ran short of supplies of grain and fodder he escaped into the hills in the beginning of October 1713. This news was recorded at Delhi on October 9, 1713.[3]

Banda retired to his Derah on the bank of river Chenab. Zakariya Khan, the Governor of Jammu, led an expedition against him. A number of Sikhs lost their lives. Their heads were cut off and sent to Delhi. They were produced before Farrukh Siyar on December 13, 1713. Zakariya Khan was granted a robe of honour with the rank of 3,000 Zat and 1,000 Sawars.[4]

Banda came out in August 1714 near Rupar with 7,000 Sikhs. Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan, Faujdar of Sarhind, fought an action with him on August 26, 1714. He sent 200 Sikh heads to Delhi.[5] Banda vanished into the hills.

Schism in Banda's ranks, October 1714

A determined effort was now made by Farrukh Siyar to suppress the Sikh rebellion through diplomacy as well as military action. He was disappointed that the Mughal Empire with all the resources at its command had failed in capturing the Sikh leader. He formed a plan to use Mata Sundari widow of Guru Gobind Singh who was living in Delhi. She was asked to persuade Banda to stop his law-

[1]*Maasir-ul-Umara*, II, 515.
[2]Khafi Khan, II, 762; Elliot and Dowson, VII, 456-57.
[3]Irvine, I, 310.
[4]Karam Singh, 94; Ganda Singh, 191.
[5]Irvine, I, 311.

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less activities, accept jagirs for himself and other Sikh leaders, and to get his Sikh soldiers recruited in the imperial army. On receiving Mata Sundari's communication Banda replied that he had no faith in Government's promises. The Emperor imprisoned Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Devi. The Emperor knew that the Sikhs would make submission in order to save the honour of Guru's widows. Mata Sundari again wrote to Banda to submit. Banda said that the ladies must endure all the hardship because his submission implied annihilation of the Khalsa, and failure of his mission entrusted to him by the Guru. The Emperor tightened the restrictions imposed upon the ladies. Mata Sundari ordered Banda immediately to submit or face excommunication.

Banda replied that "he was merely a Bairagi Faqir and had neither friend nor foe"[1] and that "he was merely carrying out the orders of Guru Gobind Singh in regard to the campaign of vengeance for the destruction of the tyrant, and the protection of the Khalsa."[2]

Mata Sundari charged Banda with disobedience and non-observance of Guru Gobind Singh's instructions. She issued orders of excommunication of Banda to all the Sikh leaders serving under Banda on the ground that he had married, that he had substituted *Fatah Darshan* for *Wah Guru Ji ka Khalsa, Wah Guru Ji ki Fatah,* and that he wanted to rule over the Singhs as their *Guru.*

On the receipt of letters of excommunication many Sikh chiefs immediately decided to separate themselves from Banda. The initiative was taken by Miri Singh, a young man in early twenties. His father Kahan Singh and grandfather Binod Singh, Banda's companions from Nander as his principal advisers appointed by Guru Gobind Singh, broke away from Banda with 5,000 Sikhs. Others who hesitated pressed Banda to take *pahul*, begin to eat meat, drink wine and wear black clothes instead of red clothes, in order to retain their loyalty. Banda declined to do so. They also fell off and joined Binod Singh. This party called itself Tatva Khalsa or the real Khalsa. Those who stuck fast to Banda were called Bandai Sikhs. They were almost equally divided, each group containing about 15,000 Sikhs.

The Emperor sent presents of doshalas and arms and other articles

[1]Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion,* original edition, 218.

[2]ibid.

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to the Tatva Khalsa. A contingent of 5,000 Sikhs under command of Kahan Singh, his son Miri Singh, Fatah Singh of Bhagto, and Sham Singh Naurangwalia was taken into service by the Governor of Lahore. Each horseman was paid Rs. 30 p.m., a footman Rs. 15 p m. and a Sardar Rs. 5 daily. The Sikhs who preferred to stay at Amritsar were paid Rs. 5,000 monthly. The parganah of Jhabal was granted to meet the expenses of the *langar*, and grain and fodder for horses.[1]

The division in the Sikhs was to be confirmed at the sacred shrine of Amritsar. Hence the Sikhs were allowed to celebrate the Diwali at Amritsar in November 1714 without any fear of molestation. On this occasion the Tatva Khalsa made a formal isolation from Bandais, and offered their allegiance as well as active service against the Bandais to the Governor of Lahore.

Revolt of Husain Khan Kheshgi of Kasur

To stabilize the bifurcation the Tatva Khalsa gave a practical proof. Abdus Samad Khan was then busy in suppressing the rebellion of Husain Khan Kheshgi of Kasur. There was only a small force at Lahore. Banda marched from Amritsar and encamped near village Kahali. The next halt was made at village Ghanayeki. He then advanced upon Lahore. The Lahore army came out to oppose him. Their advance-guard consisted of the Tatva Khalsa under Miri Singh. At the sight of his comrades arrayed on the enemy side Banda felt disgusted. He lost the ground and retired into the hills.[2]

Husain Khan Kheshgi had revolted against the Panjab Governor. Khafi Khan says he was incited into rebellion by the Sayyid Brothers who headed the Hindustani party in opposition to the Turani party at the Mughal court. Abdus Samad was an important leader of the Turani party. Husain Khan took possession of

[1]Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, Wazir-e-Hind Press, Amritsar, date of publication not given, pp. 152-58, 1914 edition, pp. 192-99; Santokh Singh, *Shri Guru Prakash Suraj Granth*, Uttar Ain Ans XIII, 374; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, II, 4th edition, Amritsar, 30-31; *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, 28-29 (Gurmukhi); Bhai Kartar Singh Giani Kalaswalia, *Baba Banda Bahadur*, 1924 edition, 205-37; Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, original edition, 218-20; Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur Kaun Tha* 103-6, (Urdu).

[2]Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur Kaun Tha*, 107 (Urdu); Kartar Singh Kalaswalia, *Baba Banda Bahadur*, 1924, pp. 236-37; Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, 218-21.

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several places in the neighbourhood of Kasur. He turned out many Imperial jagirdars and faujdars. Abdus Samad sent an expeditionary force to punish him. The Mughal commander was killed in the battle, and his baggage and treasure were plundered by the victor.

Husain Khan recruited an army of about nine thousand horsemen. Abdus Samad also raised a force of equal number and marched against him. Both the armies fought near Chunian, about 30 kms south of Lahore. It was a long and fiercely contested battle. At length an arrow struck Husain Khan. His elephant whose driver had been killed ran about at random. A shower of bullets and arrows fell on it. The howdah caught fire. Husain Khan fell dead. Many of his Afghans were killed. The rest took to flight. The Emperor conferred the title of Saif-ud-daulah (Sword of the State) on Abdus Samad Khan.[1]

Banda captured alive, December 1715

The fall of Sikh power was now sure and certain. (*Is ghar ko āg lag gai ghar ke chirāgh se*). Banda still had 14,000 combatants with him. However, the courageous Banda did not lose heart and continued to perform his mission of destruction anddevastation.[2]

Emperor Farrukh Siyar sent a strong force of 20,000 troops from Delhi,[3] under Qamar-ud-din Khan. He was joined by 5,000 troops from Sarhind. Orders were issued to Abdus Samad Khan and his son Zakariya Khan to seize Banda alive. All the three Turani leaders were related to one another. The mother of Qamar-ud-din and wife of Abdus Samad Khan were real sisters. Zakariya Khan, son of Abdus Samad Khan, was married to the sister of Qamar-ud-din. Thus the campaign became a family affair of the Turani party.

Banda was at that time carrying on operations to the north of Amritsar. Just then the Mughal army appeared on the scene with the determination of a crusader. Banda retired northward with a view to take shelter in the fort of Gurdaspur. It had been recently extended so as to accommodate sixty thousand horse and foot. Large stores of grain and fodder had also been collected there. The Mughal army converged upon him from three sides. The Delhi

[1]Khafi Khan, II, 861; Elliot and Dowson, VII, 491.
[2]Khazan Singh, op. cit., 220.
[3]ibid, 221.

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force of 20,000 men under Qamar-ud-din Khan advanced from the east, the Lahore troops about 10,000 under Abdus Samad Khan marched from the south, and the Jammu soldiery nearly 5,000 under Zakariya Khan moved from the north. To the west lay river Ravi. There was no bridge over it. All the boats had been withdrawn to the opposite bank which was closely guarded by numerous local chiefs and government officials. The pursuit was so tight that Banda could not enter his fort at Gurdaspur. He turned west. Finding that all the ways of escape had been barred he rushed into the *haveli* of Dunichand which had a large open compound with a wall around it at village Gurdas Nangal, 6 kms to the west of Gurdaspur. In it Banda accommodated 1,250 men with a small number of horses. The other Sikhs who could not be lodged therein tried to flee in all directions. They fell an easy prey to the fury of the Mughal army. According to Khafi Khan three or four thousand of them were massacred. He filled that extensive pain with blood as if it had been a dish.[1] Khafi Khan further observes: "Those who escaped the sword, were sent in collars and chains to the Emperor. Abdus Samad sent nearly two thousand heads stuffed with hay and a thousand persons bound with iron chains in charge of his son, Zakariya Khan, and others to the Emperor."[2]

Banda dug a ditch around the enclosure and filled it with water from the canal flowing nearby. The imperialists also dug trenches all around the enclosure. It took place in the beginning of April 1715. This news reached Farrukh Siyar on April 17, 1715.

The siege lasted a little over eight months. The full summer from April to June, the entire rainy season from July to September, and half of winter from October to the beginning of December passed in this condition with frequent sorties and occasional skirmishes.

Banda's enclosure was closely invested on all sides. On the east lay the Delhi troops under Qamar-ud-din Khan. On the north was Zakariya Khan, faujdar of Jammu and Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan, Governor of Sarhind. To the south was Abdus Samad Khan of Lahore. The western side on the river Ravi was guarded by petty chiefs and jagirdars such as faujdars of Gujrat, Eminabad, Patti, Kalanaur and Rajas of Kangra and Jasrota.[3]

[1]Khafi Khan in Elliot and Dowson, VII, 457.
[2]ibid.
[3]Irvine, I, 313.

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Banda was popular in Sarhind province for having abolished the Zamindari. In the Bari Doab the people did not support him. The Sikhs offered the most stubborn resistance. Muhamad Qasim who fought against the Sikhs in this campaign wrote: "The brave and daring deeds of the infernal Sikhs were wonderful. Twice or thrice everyday some forty or fifty of the black-faced Sikhs came out of their enclosure to gather grass for their cattle, and, when the combined forces of the Imperialists went to oppose them, they made an end of the Mughals with arrows, muskets and small swords, and disappeared. Such was the terror of the Sikhs and the fear of the sorceries of the Sikh Chief that the commanders of this army prayed that God might so ordain things that Banda should seek his safety in flight from the Garhi."[1]

Eventually all supplies of foodstuff and fodder came to a dead stop. All animals died, and their flesh was eaten. Then their bones and bark of trees were powdered and eaten. Many Sikhs died of hunger and the rest were completely famished and reduced to skeletons.

Seeing that resistance had completely ceased, the Mughal army on December 7, 1715, ventured into the enclosure. About three hundred men almost on the verge of death were beheaded. Their bodies were cut up in search of gold coins which they were believed to have swallowed. Banda with his 740 followers was captured. The following articles were recovered from the enclosure:

Swords	1,000
Shields	278
Small kirpans	217
Matchlocks	180
Bows and arrow cases	173
Daggers	114
Rupees	600
Gold mohars	23
Gold ornaments	a few[2]

With this beggarly equipment in men, money and material and living in a small house with an open compound, Banda had defied the mighty Mughal Empire for over eight months. No better record than this challenge can be traced anywhere else in world history.

[1] *Ibrat Namah*, 42; translation by Ganda Singh, 204.

[2] Kamwar Khan, *Tazkirat-ul-Salatin*, 179b; quoted by Ganda Singh, 224; Irvine, I, 315.

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Banda's scoffing procession in Delhi

In chains and fetters Banda was put in an iron cage which was hooked up on the back of a tall elephant. The others with ludicrous paper caps on their heads were fastened on camels, horses and asses, and later on chained on feet, waist and neck were tied in twos and threes and were placed in bullock carts. Bandsmen, buglers and drummers playing loudly went ahead, followed by 300 Sikh heads stuck up on spears. Qamar-ud-din's cavalry was in front of all, while Zakariya Khan's horsemen were in the rear. Last of all followed the nobles, faujdars and rajas at the head of their troops. While passing through towns and cities people thronged in the bazars and streets and on house tops and in balconies in crowds. In the countryside spectators stood on both sides of the road.[1]

The prisoners were first led to Lahore and then to Delhi. At Lahore the mother of Bayazid Khan, the deceased Governor of Sarhind, threw a heavy stone from the balcony of the house on the Sikh procession and killed a Sikh. The number of Sikh heads went on increasing by the execution of innocent Sikhs captured on the way. At Lahore the number of Sikh heads was 700, and in Delhi 2,000. In Muslim towns such as Sarhind, Karnal and Panipat the people treated the prisoners with utmost insolence, "usual with bigots and common among barbarous or half-civilized conquerors."[2] They heaped every indignity upon them. They used filthy abuses, mocked, whistled, ridiculed, laughed to scorn, scoffed, jeered, taunted, grinned, sneered at, hissed, hooted, pointed the finger at, turned up their noses at, snapped their fingers at, and spat at. The Sikhs drowned this mockery by singing in chorus hymns from the holy Granth.[3]

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They reached the Shalimar Garden near Delhi on February 25, 1716. Muhammad Amin Khan, father of Qamar-ud-din Khan, came to receive them and the following morning led them to the Red Fort.

On February 29, 1716, the Hindu festival day of Holi, they were taken out in a procession. Bands played ahead of all. Then followed 2,000 Sikh heads stuffed with straw fixed on spears and bamboos, their long hair flowing with the wind. After them came the dead body of a cat mounted on a long pole to show that not even a cat or dog was left alive in Sikh homes. Behind it was Banda

[1]M'Gregor, I, 109-10; Latif, *Panjab*, 279.
[2]Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, 1955 edition, 79.
[3]C.R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, 96-8.

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in an iron cage on a lofty elephant. A red turban with borders embroidered in gold was placed on his head. On his body was a crimson robe of brocade wrought in flowers of gold. It was a mockery of a bridegroom. A stalwart Mughal soldier in a coat of arms with a shining sword in hand stood behind him. The 740 prisoners were behind Banda's elephant. To vilify them their faces were made black in order to have uniformity with their hair. Black sheep-skin high-coned caps with glass beads sewn on them were placed on their heads. Some were dressed in sheep-skins, the woolly side being outward. Their left hands were tied to their necks with two pieces of wood. They were bound back to back in pairs and two pairs were mounted on the bare back of a camel. In the rear of the cavalcade were Amin Khan (later on Prime Minister), his son Qamar-ud-din Khan (also Prime Minister, and his son-in-law Zakariya Khan later Viceroy of Panjab). They rode at the head of a strong contingent of Mughal troops. The road from Shalimar Garden to the Red Fort 10 kms long was lined on both sides with troops and lakhs of exultant spectators.

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The eye-witness Mirza Muhammad Harsi writes: On this day I had gone to see the pageant (*tamasha*) as far as the Mandavi-e-Namak. From there I accompanied the procession to Qila-e-Mubarik. There was hardly anyone in the city who had not come out to see the spectacle of the accursed. There was such a crowd in the bazars and streets as had rarely been seen. The Muslims could not contain themselves with joy. But those unfortunate fellows who had been reduced to this misery were thorougly contented with their fate. Their faces bore not the slightest sign of dejection and humility. In fact most of them on camels were busy in singing. If any one of the spectators remarked: 'Now you will be killed,' they replied: "Kill us. When were we afraid of death? Had we been afraid of it, how could we have fought so many battles with you? It was through sheer starvation and want of food that we fell into your hands, otherwise the truth of our bravery is known to you."[1]

Sayyid Muhammad was another beholder. He wrote: "At that time I asked one of them by signs why they had committed such rudeness (*gustakhi*) and mischief (*shokhi*). He placed his hand on his forehead indicating that it was predestined. This expression pleased me."[2]

[1] *Ibrat Namah*, 52b-53a; Ganda Singh, 219-21.
[2] *Tabsarat-ul-Nazirin*, 187; Ganda Singh, 222.

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The procession passed along the 10 kms long road, abused, scoffed and laughed at throughout. They were brought back to the Red Fort after demonstration. Kahan Singh son of Binod Singh was the leader of Tatva Khalsa who had gone over to the Mughals and fought against Banda at Lahore. He declined to join the imperial army in the siege of Gurdas Nangal. He was arrested and sent in the retinue of Banda to Delhi. When the regular slaughter of the Sikhs began in front of the Kotwali, Mata Sundari planned to save Kahan Singh's life. The Mughal officers and guards on Sikh prisoners were heavily bribed, and Kahan Singh was substituted by another Sikh.[1] Baj Singh who was a descendant of Guru Amar Das,[2] also escaped.[3]

714 Sikhs are beheaded at Kotwali

Banda and his twenty-six officials were separated from the rest by Sarbrah Khan Kotwal. The remaining Sikhs were divided into seven groups, each of 100 Sikhs to be beheaded on all the seven days of the week. The execution began on March 5, 1716. The Sikhs were led in batches to *Kotwali* and made to stand in rows of ten in front of the police office where now stands the fountain (*Fuwara*). Before execution an offer was made to spare their lives if they could become Musalman. None volunteered to do so. They uttered *Wah Guru, Wah Guru*, and tried to outbid one another in offering themselves for sacrifice saying, "me, *mukta* (deliverer)! kill me first," was the prayer which constantly rang in the ears of the executioner.

All observers, Indian and Europeans, unite in remarking on the wonderful patience and resolution with which these men met their fate. Their attachment and devotion to their leader was astonishing to behold. They had no fear of death, and they called the executioner *Mukta* or the Deliverer.[4]

Among Banda's followers there was a lad on whose face soft hair was just appearing. Being the only son of a widow, he was the centre of all her hopes and ambitions. According to the old custom he had been recenty married as he wore the wedding thread on his wrist. He was so deeply touched at the sight of the Sikhs passing

[1]Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur Kaun Tha*, 101 (Urdu).
[2]Macauliffe, V, 239.
[3]ibid, 253.
[4]C.R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, 96-8; Irvine, I, 317.

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through his village on their way to Delhi, that he left his home and joined Banda's party. His mother and wife entreated him to return home, but he did not yield. Both the women accompanied him weeping and crying. They reached Delhi and sought help from Ratanchand, Diwan of Prime Minister Sayyid Abdullah. They submitted that the boy was not a Sikh prisoner nor the follower of the Guru, and that his life should be spared. On the recommendation of Ratanchand Sayyid Abdullah issued orders for his release. The mother and wife reached the Kotwali and learnt that he was marked for execution on that very day. He was found standing in a row outside the Kotwali.

The further scene was witnessed by Khafi Khan and Khushhal Chand. Khafi Khan says that when a police official was setting him free, the boy declined to go. He shouted: "My mother is a liar. I am heart and soul a devoted disciple of my leader (*Murshid*). Finish me quickly with my companions."[1] Khushhal Chand writes that the lad declined to recognise his mother and wife saying: "I do not know whose mother she is and from where she has brought this girl. I do not understand what she talks. My companions have gone. I have no time to lose. The delay is painful to me."[2]

The heart-breaking lamentations of the mother and the bride, persuasion of officials, and entreaties of bystanders bore no fruit. He rushed back to his place, put his head before the executioner, and lay dead in the twinkling of an eye.

The heads and bodies lay in separate heaps the whole day. In the evening they were taken out of the city in carts and hung upon trees along the roads.

Some Englishmen as representatives of the British East India Company were then present in the capital. On March 10, 1716, they submitted a brief report on the "Arrest and Massacre of the Sikhs at Delhi" to the Governor of Fort William, Calcutta, in which they said about Banda: "He at present has his life prolonged with most of his mutsuddys in hope to get an account of his treasure in the several parts of his kingdom and of those that assisted him, when afterwards he will be executed, for the rest there are 100 each day beheaded. It is not a little remarkable with what patience they

[1] *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, II, 76; C.R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, 96-8.

[2] *Tarikh-e-Muhammad Shahi*, 247b; Ganda Singh, 229, f.n.

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undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one apostatised from their new formed Religion."[1]

Banda executed near Qutab Minar

Banda's wife, a princess of Chamba, his 4-year-old son Ajai and child's nurse had been arrested at Chamba and brought to Delhi. They were admitted into the harem of Darbar Khan Nazir. Banda and his 26 officials were tortured for three months and a half to disclose places of their hidden treasure. When all attempts had failed, it was decided to execute Banda on June 9, 1716, and his officials the following day.

The same old golden turban and cloak were put on Banda. Fettered and chained all over he was placed in an iron cage which was fastened on the back of an elephant. His companions were put on the bare back of camels. They were preceded by Sarbrah Khan Kotwal at the head of his police force. In the rear was Ibrahim-ud-din, Head of Artillery. The procession passed through the main streets of Delhi. They were taken to the tomb of Khwaja Qutab-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki near Qutab Minar in Mehrauli 16 kms distant from the Red Fort. They were led around the tomb of the late Emperor Bahadur Shah who had failed in suppressing Banda's rebellion so as to give satisfaction to his soul. The leading nobles had already gathered there.

Banda was taken out of the cage and seated on the ground. As usual he was offered life on his embracing Islam. The proposal was rejected. Though heavily chained his right hand was freed. His son, Ajai, was placed in his lap, and a dagger put in his right hand to kill the child. Banda did not stir. Thereupon the dagger was thrust into the body of the child, and his heart and entrails were thrust into Banda's mouth. He shut his mouth and he remained absolutely unmoved.[2] Muhammad Amin Khan, later on Prime Minister, was standing nearby. He came closer and intensely looked into the eyes of Banda. He was deeply impressed with his noble features. He remarked: "It is surprising that one, who shows so much acuteness in his features, and so much of nobility in his conduct, should have been guilty of such horrors."

In complete composure and tranquillity Banda replied, "I will

[1]J.T. Wheeler, *Early Records of British India*, p. 180; C.R. Wilson, *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, 96-8; *Maasir-ul-Umara*, II, 516-17.

[2]Khafi Khan, II, 766-67; Elliot, VII, 459.

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tell you. Whenever men become so corrupt and wicked as to relinquish the sence of equity and to abandon themselves to all kinds of excesses, then the providence never fails to raise up a scourage like me to chastise a race so depraved; but when the measure of punishment is full then He raises up men like you to bring him to punishment."[1]

After this Banda's right eye was dug out with a sharp pointed dagger. Then the left eye was removed in a similar manner. With a pause his left foot was chopped off. A little while afterwards both of his arms were lopped off. Then with red-hot pincers his flesh was cut off bit by bit. Later his legs, ears and nose were removed from his body. His brain was blown out with a hammer. Last of all his remaining body was hacked to pieces.

This horrid savagery lasted the whole day. Banda displayed heavenly calm, no tears, no cries, no groaning, no expression of grief, no jerk in the body, and no sign of pain. Throughout he remained composed and collected, serene and steady, unruffled and unstirred. A curious creature was he, this Banda Bahadur. He had a power of concentrating his mind on something away from his body and his surroundings with such intensity as if he were in a trance.

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This abominable scene was staged before the very eyes of Banda's officials who included among themselves Fatah Singh, Ali Singh and Gulab Singh Bakhshi who had remained in the Lohgarh fort after Banda's escape.[2] They were beheaded on June 10, 1716, at the same place.

Banda did not die in vain. This tragic event changed the course of not only Sikh history but also of the history of Panjab. Banda had shown to the Sikhs the difference between those who were in power and those who were out of it. The lesson of power once practically taught could not be forgotten by a militant community. They continuously worked to regain what they had lost and in half a century became undisputed masters of the Land of Five Rivers.

Banda's place in history

Banda was a Rajput. The blood of a Kshatriya flowed in his veins. Thus he inherited the spirit of bravery, heroism, love of independence and self-sacrifice from his race. This spirit was further

[1] *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, 403; Raymond's translation, I, 91.

[2] Khafi Khan says that Banda, his son, and 'two or three of his principa companions' had been imprisoned in the Fort. Elliot and Dowson, VII, 478.

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strengthened by his long residence in Maharashtra where he had seen with his own eyes how Shambhuji, son of Shivaji, his step-brother Rajaram and his widow, Tara Bai, had carried on a life and death struggle against Aurangzeb who was personally leading a campaign of annihilation against the Marathas. His dormant spirit of nationalism was awakened and put into its practical application by Guru Gobind Singh. His national enthusiasm was further aroused by the Guru's sufferings and sacrifices and ultimately by his death as a result of the Mughal trickery.

Curiously, Banda had a great resemblance in looks with Guru Gobind Singh. He possessed the same medium height and bulk of the body and colour of the face. Under his bushy beard and moustaches and long hair on head, the facial features also looked alike. Further both spoke the same language which was a mixture of Hindi and Panjabi. Both were fond of covering themselves with arms cap-a-pie. Both were in possession of a commanding voice and manner which resulted in implicit obedience from their followers. Both could arouse the zeal for supreme sacrifice of their devotees.

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Banda aimed at national awakening and liberation of the country from the oppressive government of the Mughals. Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh had transformed the Sikhs from a peaceful people into a class of warriors. They fought against the government in self-defence. They never took any offensive. They did not acquire territory, did not take prisoners, and did not seize enemy's property and wealth. The two Gurus never tried to establish their own rule in their own territory. They believed it belonged to the Government. The government rules were obeyed, and government coins were used.

Banda, on the other hand, always took offensive. He fought battles, took prisoners and killed them, seized the enemy's property and lands, and set up his own government. He issued his own coins, had his own official seal and gave orders which had the force of firmans of the Mughal Emperors. He did not want to weaken the Mughal power, but to destroy its root and branch, and to establish in its place national rule or self-government.

Banda was the first man who laid down the foundation of political sovereignty of the Sikhs. He made Sikhism popular with the people of Panjab, not by force or persuasion, but by his bravery and generosity. In about a year, more than one lakh of persons embraced Sikhism and became the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh.

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Those who had not heard the names of the Gurus, were attracted towards Sikhism by Banda's victories. Banda had shown what self-government meant. After his fall the lesson was not lost on the Sikhs. He had brought about a revolution in the minds of the people. A will was created in the masses. Heads could be cut off, but the ideas remained, leading ultimately to success.

Banda was a great reformer. He broke down the barriers of caste, creed and religion. He appointed sweepers and cobblers as big officers before whom high caste Hindus, Brahmins and Kshatriyas stood with folded hands awaiting their orders. He believed in socialism. He distributed all his riches among his folowers. He abolished the zamindari system and established peasant-proprietorship making the actual tillers of the soil its masters. He was opposed to the use of intoxicant drugs. He prohibited drinking of *bhang* and wine and smoking of tobacco or *charas*.

He knew the real cause of the weakness of Hindus. The spirit of mercy, compassion, sympathy, tenderness, forbearance and their melting mood inculcated in them by religion (*Daya Dharam ka mul hai*), had been responsible for the slavery of the Hindus by people from the north-west. He showed that the only way to meet the eternal foe was to adopt the policy of paying them in their own coin, a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye, and to pay off old scores. The Sikhs learnt this lesson from Banda and admirably succeeded in establishing their own rule in their homeland.

Banda possessed the high ideal of life, sincerity, honesty, indomitable spirit, unbounded enthusiasm, rare daring, single-minded devotion to his cause, dare-devilry of the highest type and nobility of character. It was for this reason that none of his 740 followers renounced his faith to save his life. Even a young lad who had been pardoned by the Prime Minister refused to leave Banda in the face of death.

Banda seems to have destroyed about half a lakh of Muslims. This brutality cannot be approved in any age by any people. But some justification can be offered from the condition of the times. Banda was a contemporary of Aurangzeb. He had killed all the Satnamis even to a man, woman or child, numbering about 50,000. The same number if not more of the Jats of Bharatpur-Agra-Delhi region were destroyed. Rajputs and Marathas must share between themselves a loss of about 50,000 men each. The total number was in no case less than two lakhs. Forcible conversion and on refusal

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death was in addition. There was almost wholesale destruction of Hindu temples and other religious institutions in northern India.

Banda had travelled from north to south and back again, and he had seen all this destruction, rape and rapine with his own eyes. The Rajput spirit was throbbing in him. It was lying dormant under an ashes-smeared skin. This spirit was aroused by Guru Gobind Singh, and retaliation was a natural consequence. Latif says that Guru Gobind Singh had selected Banda for "avenging the death of his father and two sons, for which purpose he could not have singled out a better instrument than this ruthless blood-sucker."[1]

After his conquest of Sarhind Banda considerably mellowed down in his fury against the Muslim population. He placed no restrictions on their *Azan* and *Nimaz*. At Kalanaur in April 1711 he recruited 5,000 Muslims in his army.[2]

To sum up, Banda was a demon in the eyes of Muslims, a great national hero for Hindus, and for the Sikhs their first empire builder. In Indian history he occupies the place of a genius spiritual, political and military, consecrated or perverted as one might think. In world history he should rank not less than Alexander the Great, Halaku, Chingiz Khan, Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali or Napoleon Bonaparte.

[1]Latif, *Panjab*, 281.

[2]*Akhbar-e-Durbar-e-Mualla* (Jaipur), dated April 28, 1711, quoted by Ganda Singh in *A Short History of the Sikhs*, I, 1469-1765; 1950 edition), pp. 104-5.

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CHAPTER 2

Attempt at Annihilation of the Sikhs Fails 1716-1738

Policy of Farrukh Siyar

By way of reward for having captured Banda, Emperor Farrukh Siyar conferred on Abdus Samad Khan "a mansab of 6,000, a bedecked *palki*, elephants, horses, ornaments of gold, jewels worn in the turban, a turban bedecked with gold, upper graments, a pearl necklace and some parganas as jagir in the Panjab."[1]

The Emperor then issued a general edict which was applicable to all parts of the empire. According to it every Sikh wherever seen was to be immediately arrested. He was to be offered only one alternative, either Islam or sword. It was to be executed there and then without any hesitation or loss of time. A schedule of valuable rewards was proclaimed. For every Sikh head Rs. 25 was to be given, and for a Sikh captive a sum of Rs. 100 was to be awarded. Their pretty girls were to be reduced to concubines, and others to be made maid servants. When a Muslim died his grave was to be dug by the Sikhs or their Hindu sympathisers. For *begar* (unpaid labour), in place of cobblers Sikhs were to be employed.[2]

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Abdus Samad's persecution

The Emperor's orders were strictly obeyed. The Governors of Sarhind, Lahore and Jammu tried to surpass one another in persecution of the Sikhs in order to win the goodwill of Farrukh Siyar. Abdus Samad was entrusted with the supervision of this work. They took written undertaking from the headmen of villages in their jurisdiction not to allow any Sikh to live there. If there were some

[1] *Haqiqat Bina-wa-Aruj-e-Singhan*, translated by I. Banerji in Indian Historica Quarterly, March 1942.

[2] Forster, *Journey from Bengal to England*, I. 312-13; Browne, *India Tracts*, II, 13; Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, 85; M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, I, 113-14; Cunningham. 95; *Shri Bir Mirgesh Gur Bilas*, 82 (Gurmukhi).

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Sikhs, they were to be arrested and sent to the neighbouring police station. In case they could not capture them, a report was to be lodged with Government officials about their presence. Scouts roamed about everywhere to see that the lambardars or village headmen obeyed the Government orders. Local intelligencers were appointed to report in secret at the nearby police or military posts. Connivance on their part resulted in imprisonment and confiscation of property.

They declared their own lists of prizes: Rs. 10 for supplying information about the presence of a Sikh, Rs. 20 for actually showing a Sikh, Rs. 40 for helping in his capture, and Rs. 80 for bringing every Sikh head.[1]

In those days there were separate wells of drinking water for Muslims and Hindus or Sikhs. In Sikh villages the wells were polluted by dropping cow's entrails and bones so that they might be forced to take water from Muslim wells drawn in leather buckets to which they were opposed.

The Sikhs disappeared from the plains of Panjab

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The Sikhs were in a critical condition. They had no leader, no guide, and no man of great ability and courage to keep them in spirit and to show them the way through difficulties and misfortunes. The Tatva Khalsa who had taken up service under the Mughals fled away. In that attempt many were slain. On the other hand, "such was the keen spirit that animated the persecution, such was the success of the exertions, that the name of a Sicque no longer existed in the Mughal dominion. Those who still adhered to the tenets of Nanock, either fled into the mountains at the head of the Panjab, or cut off their hair, and exteriorly renounced the profession of their religion."[2]

The faithful followers of the Guru experienced the worst possible time in their history. Hunted like hare and pursued like wild beasts they wandered from place to place seeking shelter to save themselves from the fury of the government, from the revenge of the hostile Muslim population, and from greed of the toady Hindus. Only Shiwalik hills, Malwa desert and Lakhi Jungle held out their arms open to receive them affectionately and to offer them wild fruit, vegetables and flesh to eat and enjoy the beauty of nature.

[1]Mulkraj Bhalla. *Shahid Ganj*, Lahore, 1895, pp. 22-3 (Urdu).
[2]Forster, *Journey*, I, 312-13.

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If anybody enquired of a Hindu woman how many sons she had, she would reply that she had three sons, but one of them had become a Sikh. Thereby she meant that the converted one should be considered among the dead.

Starvation! Distress! ! Despair! ! ! A horrible thing, which included days without bread, nights without sleep, evenings without a light, a hearth without a fire, a future in the dark, humiliations, self-respect outraged, disgust, prostration!

A wonderful and terrible trial indeed, from which the weak came out strong, from which the strong came out sublime. There were many great deeds done in the small struggles of life. There was a determined though unseen bravery, which defended itself foot to foot in the darkness, noble and mysterious triumphs which no eye could see.

Misery, misfortunes, isolation, abandonment, poverty, privation, distress, are the battlefields which have their heroes, obscure heroes, sometimes greater than the renowned heroes. Strong and rare natures are thus created. Misery becomes a mother. Privation gives birth to power of soul and mind. Distress is the nurse of self-respect. Misfortune is a good breast for great souls. Poverty when it succeeds turns the whole will towards effort, and the whole soul towards aspiration. Their punitives had a hundred brilliant and coarse amusements, racing, hunting, gaming, feasting, drinking, womanising, using the lower portions of the soul at the cost of its higher and delicate parts. The poor Sikhs in exile had nothing more than a reverie. They went free to the play which God gave them. They beheld the sky, space and stars. They saw flowers and fruits of wild growth. They dreamt. They felt that they were great.

A wonderful feeling sprang in their minds. They thought that they were millionaires of enjoyment which nature offered lavishly to open souls. Their robust health, great strength, quick steps, strong arms, stout legs, shining eyes, fresh cheeks, black locks, rosy lips, white teeth, pure breath were the gifts of nature. Their feet were in difficulties, in obstacles, in thorns, in the mire; but their heads were in the light. They were firm, serene, attentive, serious, content with little. Hard life made them free. Thought made them noble.

Mata Sundari also did not escape the fury of the Government and the people. She had adopted a boy whom she named after her deceased son Ajit Singh. He killed a Muslim beggar who daily received rich alms from him, and one day pestered him too much for

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a greater gift. Ajit Singh was arrested, tied to the tail of an elephant who dragged him through the streets of Delhi. At one narrow turning the elephant in rage placed its foot on his head and crushed it. Mata Sundari fled to Mathura. The Raja of Jaipur provided her with a suitable residence and fixed a handsome allowance for her subsistence. Her house and property in Delhi were seized by the Muslims.[1]

The Sikhs come out in view

To a superficial observer it looked as if the power of the Sikhs had been totally destroyed and the sect extirpated. But the hammering did not "reduce them to pulp." It hardened them "to tampered steel."[2] In a couple of years the Sikhs began to show their faces in out of the way places. Reports began to arrive at the capital that the Sikhs were plundering government officials and supporters in the villages situated at the foot of the hills and on the outskirts of the Lakhi jungle and Malwa desert.

Several factors were responsible for such a situation. The constant fear of death from which no Sikh of those days was free had made them bold and fearless. Their extreme poverty and utter necessity for keeping body and soul together had driven them to take to plundering. They were determined not to sell their lives cheaply to hunger and starvation. Their resolution was to sell life at the highest price. It implied that they should die after killing as many of their enemies as possible. They also believed in their right to live. They naturally thought that such a government as had deprived them of this privilege must be destroyed. They felt that foreigners had no right to rule over them. They knew that their object of destroying the Mughal government could not be achieved by sitting idle in the jungles. They realized that they must pay the usual price for freedom. They had an optimistic view of life. They considered that their cause was just, and was bound to succeed. The work of the last Guru, they argued, was on the verge of destruction, when the sudden appearance of Banda Bahadur had turned the tables in their favour. Similarly they hoped that sooner or later a leader was bound to arise among them who would again lead them on to fresh victories. They were resolved not to trust an alien

[1]Macauliffe, V, 254-57.

[2]Percival Spear, *The Oxford History of Modern India*, Oxford, 1965. p. 166.

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power again at any cost. Such were their feelings which made the Sikhs renew their activities.

The ventures of the Sikhs met with uniform success. This was due to many factors which were eating into the vitals of the Mughal Empire. The Emperors and Wazirs led a life of pleasure and inactivity. Party factions were strong at the court. The rival nobles thought no more of the empire but of their own selfish ends. As a nominee of his party, the Panjab governor was dragged into Delhi politics. He was thus unable to pay undivided attention to his government. There is evidence to show that revolts and rebellions in the province were secretly encouraged, and possibly financed, by the rivals of the Governor. Khafi Khan, a contemporary writer says that the Afghans of Kasur were instigated by the Sayyid Brothers who headed the Hindustani party. Isa Khan Munj, another rebel on both sides of the Satluj, was protected by Samsam-ud-daulah, Khan-e-Dauran, a favourite of Emperor Muhammad Shah, 1719-1748.[1]

The machinery of the Delhi Government having failed to function, the Panjab Governor was left to his own resources to cope with the situation single-handed. His forces were centred in the capital. From there he sent out detachments to quell disturbances wherever they arose. Considering the means of communications of those days, it was no easy task to keep a constant pursuit of the Sikhs in their impenetrable retreats which were at a long distance from the seat of government.

The Sikhs confined their lawless activities close to their places of refuge. They appeared some times in the day, but often at night, not in one particular area, but at different places. If a certain locality was attacked one day, they would appear the next day 40 or 50 kms away. It was therefore extremely difficult to anticipate their targets. When some persons gave a clue about their whereabouts, their crops were destroyed, cattle carried away, and members of their families were done to death. This created such a terror in the countryside that none came forward to help the Government troops. This led to great confusion and chaos not only by the Sikhs but also by numerous robbers and dacoits. As a result highway traffic came almost to a close.[2]

[1]Khafi Khan, II, 767-68, 861-65; *Maasir-ul-Umara*, I, 604; II, 825-28; *Siyar*, II, 47.

[2]Browne, *India Tracts*, II, 13; Bakhtmal, *Khalsa Namah*, 56 (Persian ms.); Ali-ud-din, *Ibrat Namah*, 95b (Persian ms.).

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Abdus Samad fails to suppress the Sikhs

For a few years Abdus Samad Khan maintained peace and order in the country. Lawless activities ceased. Agriculture prospered and trade flourished. He then relaxed his vigilance. This encouraged the Sikhs to raise their heads. Abdus Samad failed to suppress their renewed disturbances. Kanhiyalal says that the Sikhs became so bold as to attack towns and cities in broad daylight and after plundering a number of shops hastily beat a retreat. Nobody pursued them. They would seize bundles of clothes from washermen working on the banks of a river or a nullah or at a well.[1] They would get hold of milch cattle and horses and would carry them away into the places of their hiding. In this way they procured supplies of food and clothing.

Zakariya Khan given charge of Lahore, 1726

Regular complaints began to pour in the capital against Abdus Samad's failure to restore law and order in the country. The Emperor administered sharp warnings to him, but to no avail. Differences also arose between Abdus Samad Khan and his son Zakariya Khan who had been Governor of Jammu from 1713 to 1720 and of Kashmir from 1720 to 1726. Zakariya Khan was married to the sister of Nawab Qamar-ud-din Khan, who was the Prime Minister of Muhammad Shah. He waited upon the Emperor and sought the governorship of Panjab assuring him that he would establish quiet life very soon. He was supported by Qamar-ud-din Khan. The Emperor bifurcated the province into two parts of Lahore and Multan. Lahore was given to Zakariya Khan with the title of Khan Bahadur and Abdus Samad was transferred to Multan where he died in 1737. Then Multan also passed under Zakariya Khan.

Zakariya Khan was a strong and just ruler. He could not tolerate any subversion of order. He recruited an army of 20,000 men.[2] One half of them were retained at the capital. The other half was divided into ten batches of 1000 men each. They were provided with fast-running horses and camels, and armed with light guns called *Zanburak*. They were posted in different parts of the province. Their duty was to pounce upon the Sikhs wherever found and send them in chains to Lahore. This was called *Gashti Fauj* or moving military

[1]Kanhiyalal, *Tarikh-e-Panjab*, 65 (Urdu).

[2]Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, I, 108 (Persian, printed).

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columns. In a short time the Sikhs were driven away into their old retreats. Peace was restored.[1] Price of grain fell and people were contented and happy.[2]

Major-General James Wolfe, aged thirty-one, the hero of Canada in Seven Years War, used to sing:

Why, soldiers! why
Should we be melancholy, boys?
Why, soldiers! why,
We whose business 'tis to die?

It was a passive note when he was winning.

The Sikhs when they were losing everything sang a positive song:

Listen, O mother of the Mughals!
The Singhs, thy sons-in-law, are coming.
Listen, O sister of the Mughals!
Thy jewels would be taken by the Singhs.

Majha, the homeland of the Sikhs was completely ruined.[3]

Tum ne to āzmā ke dekh liyā
Khāk men bhi milā ke dekh liyā.

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In order to drown their grief and sorrow they took to drinking bhang or hemp which grew everywhere in plenty. After pounding its leaves in a mortar with a pestle they separated its juice from the pulp which was pressed into a ball and struck against a wall or a tree, saying it was a cannon ball hitting the heart of the Mughals.

The Khan Bahadur persecuted the Sikhs to the utmost. Prizes were offered for giving information about the Sikhs, or capturing them or beheading them. If a Sikh appeared in the fields or a village, a commotion was raised as if a tiger had penetrated in their midst. Everybody cried: A Singh has come. A Singh is lurking in the garden. A Singh is there in the fields. All the able-bodied men armed with daggers, swords and sticks would hurriedly rush in that direction.

The Sikhs would immediately vanish. They could find some rest only in the dreadful caves, secluded ravines and in dense forests where wild beasts and poisonous reptiles abounded.

These men remained as brave as a lion, as fearless as a tiger and

[1]Ali-ud-din, *Ibrat Namah*, British Museum, London, 95b (Persian ms.); Kanhiyalal, *Tarikh-e-Panjab*, 65-6

[2]Haqiqat Bina-wa-'Aruj-e-Singhan, in *Indian Historical Quarterly*, March 1942.

[3]Kanhiyalal, *Tarikh-e-Panjab*, p. 66 (Urdu).

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as firm as a rock. No pain, no hardship, no affliction, no mortification, no vexation, no agony, and no suffering could shake off their determination and could make them falter or flicker from their objective. Residence in wilderness made them fiery and ferocious like tigers, bears and cobras only for their foes, while they remained gentle, mild, sober, soft, cool and quiet for their friends and sympathisers. Love of liberty never allowed them to bend their heads.

"Two men looked through prison bars,
one saw mud, the other stars."

Their heads remained erect and stiff. They always looked up. Despair did not touch them. If the Mughal banner was flying in populated places, the Khalsa reigned supreme outside habitations. The Government ruled in the day, the Khalsa at night. As they had no leader, they were commanderless troopers, and not a regular army.

Zakariya Khan's policy of benevolence

Zakariya Khan was an adept in practical politics as well as in administration. He was also a great scholar of Persian and had closely studied the works of the celebrated Persian poet Shaikh Sa'di. He followed the policy of harshness and benevolence in turn as laid down by the savant;

Darushti wa narmi baham dar bah ast.

He was keen to preserve peace in his province. After seven years' hard struggle he realized that the Sikhs had not been beaten. He decided to pacify them. In March 1733 he sent a powerful deputation to the Sikhs in their haunts.[1] The deputation was provided with a letter of authority granting the Sikhs a jagir to the value of one lakh of rupees and the title of Nawab together with a khilat or robes of honour for their leader. They were to be assured of a safe residence at Amritsar.

This delegation seems to have met the Sikhs somewhere at the foot of Shiwalik hills possibly in the district of Hoshiarpur where most of the Majha Sikhs were then living. The Malwa Sikhs preferred deserts of Bhatinda and Lakhi Jungle. The Sikhs sat in a

[1]Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 210-17. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh write that the man deputed was Subeg Singh 'a government contractor,' and he met them at the Akal Takht, Amritsar. It is unbelievable that the Government could give contracts to a Sikh. It was also impossible for the Sikhs to gather at Amritsar in those days. *A Short History of the Sikhs*, 121, 129-30.

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semi-circle, said Ardas and asked the commission to explain their business. Their head enquired if there was any leader of the Sikhs. They replied that every one of them was a leader. Thereupon the head of the deputation placed the khilat before the first man in the front row. Ratan Singh Bhangu says it was Darbara Singh who occupied a prominent place among the Sikh refugees of Majha. It was hot and one Sikh named Kapur Singh who was fond of serving the Sangat was fanning the congregation. Darbara Singh totally rejected the honour, though he showed willingness to make peace with the Government. The robes were passed on to the next man until they lay in front of the last person. He rose and placed them before Kapur Singh. The whole gathering laughed, clapped their hands and prevailed upon him to accept the offer.

The khilat consisted of three pieces—a *dastar* or turban, a *jama* or gown and a *patka* or girdle. In the midst of loud shouts of Sat Sri Akal, the envoy dressed Kapur Singh with his own hands, and declared him Nawab Kapur Singh. He then placed the letter granting him the jagir and the title in his hands. Thus Kapur Singh became Nawab as well as a jagirdar of the Mughal Government on the condition that he would never be called upon to attend the court either at the capital or in camp.[1]

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Two main divisions of the Sikhs, 1734

The Sikhs moved to Amritsar on the Baisakhi day 1733 and took up residence in the neighbourhood of the holy temple and the tank. Nawab Kapur Singh was given charge of the langar, general stores and stables of horses. It was a hard job to feed thousands of men and their horses. Regular supplies of milk, ghi and meat some times failed, though there was no dearth of grain and pulses. Vegetables were not much in vogue except potatoes and onion. Darbara Singh was mainly responsible for keeping order and discipline in a large body of the Sikhs. He died in 1734. The whole burden now fell upon Kapur Singh.

The younger men were in revolt. They complained against faulty distribution of foodstuff for them and grain for horses. They denounced the old sardars who got the best part of the supplies. As a matter of fact there was the basic conflict of age. The young men did not approve of the ideas of old people. It was a psychological

[1]Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 210-17; Gian Singh, *Shamshir Khalsa*, 45-6.

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dispute which existed everywhere. It became acute because young Sikhs were absolutely free from the control of their elders. Nawab Kapur Singh solved the problem by dividing the Sikhs into two groups on the basis of age. The older group was called Budha Dal and the younger group Taruna Dal.

The division of the property was also made. The young leaders also did not agree among themselves. Each considered himself equal to others. Hence the Taruna Dal was further sub-divided into five groups, each with its own derah, standard, stores, stables and kitchens. The Budha Dal remained at Hari Mandir and the sacred tank. For the sake of convenience the Budha Dal was also divided into five groups. The five derahs of Taruna Dal were established at different places at Amritsar known as Ramsar, Lachhmansar, Bibeksar, Santokhsar and Kaulsar. Their leaders were Dip Singh, Dharam Singh, Dasaunda Singh, Bir Singh and Jiwan Singh. The leaders of Budha Dal were Sham Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh, Bhag Singh, Gurdial Singh and Kapur Singh. The administrative headship of both the Dals remained with Kapur Singh who controlled the general stores and funds.[1]

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Haqiqat Rai's martyrdom, 1743

About this time a tragic event took place which became a part of Panjab's folklore as well as a fragment of history. This was the martyrdom of a 15 year old school boy, named Haqiqat Rai. He was the son of Baghmal, a Puri Khatri of Sialkot. He was a clerk in the office of Amir Beg, the district officer of Sialkot. There were no Hindu schools in those days. Hence Haqiqat Rai studied in a Muslim maktab. He was very intelligent, and beat all Muslim students in Persian, not to speak of Arithmetic. The boys were generally jealous of him.

According to the prevailing practice he was married at the age of ten in a Sikh family of Wadala. There he heard the story of the sacrifices of Gurus and the Sikhs, and felt deeply impressed. One day some of his school fellows abused Hindu gods and goddesses. Haqiqat retorted by abusing Prophet Muhammad's daughter, Fatima. A report was lodged with the Qazi whose judgement was either conversion to Islam or death. Amir Beg tried his best to

[1]Ratan Singh Bhangu does not mention this organization, though he speaks of Budha Dal and Taruna Dal on pp. 401, 412, 457. *Vide* Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, 1923, pp. 500-55.

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save the child, but the Qazi was adamant. The case was forwarded to Zakariya Khan at Lahore. He took a lenient view of the matter and was inclined to set the boy free.

The Muslims gathered in thousands before the Governor's court and demanded that the Qazi's decision must be upheld. Zakariya Khan referred the case to the provincial Qazi who confirmed the previous judgment. Zakariya Khan was helpless. No persuasion or pressure succeeded in forcing the boy to accept Islam. He was beheaded. A was *smadh* built over his ashes. A great fair was held there on Basant Panchami day in February every year up to 1947, when Lahore went to Pakistan.[1]

The Compact breaks down, 1735

Zakariya Khan had expected that this act of kindness might kill their spirit of revolt and should pacify them. The situation remained peaceful for two years and a half. The members of Taruna Dal hated their inactive life at Amritsar. Most of them dispersed to their homes. They found them in shambles. Their houses had been ruined. Everything therein had been plundered. Some relatives were missing. Others were found leading a miserable life. Their fields lay deserted, and trees had been cut down and burnt. This spectacle filled them with disgust, intense hatred and great fury. They thought that all the sacrifices of their Gurus, their ancestors and brethren had not been made for the sort of life which they were then leading. They realized that their goal was independence which could not be obtained by submission to an alien rule. According to Ratan Singh Bhangu[2] they revived their illegal activities.

Zakariya Khan thereupon suggested to Nawab Kapur Singh that the Government was prepared to recruit the young Sikhs in the imperial army. The proposal was rejected. The Governor then asked him if he could prevail upon his men to settle down in their villages as peaceful agriculturists, promising them full remittance of land revenue. Kapur Singh said he could give a reply after consulting them. This point was mooted on the occasion of Dewali in 1735. The Sikhs did not argee. The Government confiscated the jagir, and the Sikhs fled away from Amritsar[3].

[1]Mulk Raj Bhalla, *Shahid Ganj*, 97-109.

[2]Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 217-18; Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, 500-505; *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, 119.

[3]Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, 120-21.

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The Sikh wanderings in the wilderness, 1736-38

Khan Bahadur Zakariya Khan was a very strict disciplinarian. He believed in the benevolent rule of Government. His efforts to make the Sikhs peaceful citizens had failed. He could not allow disorder and confusion in the country under him. He resorted to the same old practice. Moving columns armed with light artillery placed on camel backs were ordered to issue in pursuit of the Sikhs. All government officials down to the village headmen were put on the alert. The Sikhs knew what lay in store for them. While running from place to place they tried to seize as many horses and weapons as possible. They concentrated on towns and cities lying on their way where they could easily obtain riches. They turned towards the river Satluj. On their crossing this river the pursuit was given up. The Khan Bahadur had the satisfaction of seeing all quiet in the Panjab.

The Sikhs retired into the hills of Bilaspur, Nalagarh and Sarmur. Many went into the Lakhi Jungle, while some lurked in the sandy areas of Bhatinda and Muktsar. In November 1738 Zakariya Khan murdered Bhai Mani Singh,[1] the high priest of Amritsar. This aroused the Sikh fury to the highest pitch. An opportunity soon presented itself to them to wreak vengeance on the Government. This was Nadir Shah's invasion.

[1]For a detailed account of Bhai Mani Singh, vide author's book, *Sikh Gurus*, pp. 283-88.

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CHAPTER 3

Sikh Organisation into Fraternities 1739-1745

Introductory

It should be remembered that the first efforts of the Sikhs for gaining power and independence commenced at a time when the Mughal Empire had lost its vigour and energy, and when internal turmoil, the conspiracies of an intemperate court, the revolt of distant governors and the frequent irruptions of foreign hordes were fostering the pursuit of selfish interest and a general slackening of allegiance. These external advantages coupled with the intrinsic worth of the Sikhs enhanced their opportunities for the realization of their wishes. Firm faith and high hope on the one hand and power of resistance and tenacity of purpose on the other formed the main features of the Sikh character. The disabilities of the Sikhs at this period were not few. They were almost leaderless for want of a towering personality among them. Under a policy of ruthless persecution by the Government they were facing a strong economic depression, and having been driven away from their hearths and homes possessed no sure means of livelihood. To crown all, the public showed them no sympathy in their sad plight from fear of the Government of the day.

But their nascent religious spirit, strong enthusiasm for gaining freedom, and the close unity of brotherhood, maintained by common grievances, common feelings, a common object and utter poverty, kept them in a cheerful frame of mind under these desperate circumstances.

The year 1739 saw the beginning of a new series of foreign invasions from the north-west and then commenced the long and fierce contest which was to decide whether the Musalmans or the Sikhs were to rule the Land of the Five Rivers.

From this year began the first stage of the evolution of the Sikh power, when they organized themselves into a body. Their strength

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was greatly increased as they were joined by numerous Hindus whose resentment at the oppression of centuries was suddenly excited by the appearance in the country of the overwhelming forces of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Durrani. Severe persecution had already driven the Sikhs into hiding and utter necessity had forced them to adopt the life of petty robbers. They now rose as powerful freebooters and marauders, and having acquired sufficient force they set themselves up above law. They were defeated over and over again and were scattered to the four winds, but we find them still returning to their profession soon after the tempest had blown over.

Sikhs take advantage of Nadir's invasion, January-May, 1739

For a period of five months during which Nadir Shah was in India, the provinces of the Panjab and Delhi were thrown into great confusion.[1]

There was no civil government in the country except in name. The forces of disorder naturally made their appearance everywhere.[2] The Sikhs who had a fair amount of ogranization took the best advantage of this confused and helpless state of the province. They were fortunate perhaps in having a few gifted and capable men among them, like Kapur Singh, Bhag Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. They gathered together a large number of their co-religionists and impressed upon them the necessity of utilizing these opportunities to the utmost. To begin with, they fell upon the peaceable inhabitants of the Panjab, who had sought shelter in the hills and plundered them of that property which they endeavoured to secure from the rapacity of the foreign invader. Enriched with these spoils and emboldened by their exploits, they left their fastnesses in the hills and spread themselves over the north-eastern portion of the plains of the Panjab carrying fire and sword everywhere. They threw up a small mud fort at Dallewal[3] to serve them as a place of retreat and refuge as also a store house for their booty. It was from this base that the Sikhs sallied out to carry on their depredations.

[1]Anandram, 21,

[2]"Muhammad Shah's superintendents and officials posted in the country lost all authority. The state affairs were managed by the agents of the Shah of *Vilayat*." *Bakhtmal*, 57. Cf. Malcolm's *Sketch*, 86; *History of the Punjab*, I, 183-4.

[3]Malcolm, 68; *History of the Sikhs*, I, 184. Dallewal was conveniently situated in the centre of a dense forest to the N.W. of Amritsar on the bank of the Ravi and commanded a rich and fertile tract of land called Riyarki.

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They committed highway robbery[1] and laid under contribution the neighbouring country of the Upper Bari Doab, where their leader Banda had been arrested twenty-three years earlier and in the north of which they could seek easy shelter among the lower spurs of the Himalayas (in case of an emergency). Sohan Lal writes: "They (Sikhs) established themselves in the Bari Doab under the leadership of Bhag Singh Ahluwalia. They stopped the traffic, plundered and raided a large number of villages and towns and exacted heavy tribute from the neighbouring zamindars Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the son of Bhag Singh's sister, a handsome and courageous youth, was his uncle's deputy and exercised full authority over matters and things concerning Bhag Singh. The other Sikh chiefs also accepted the leadership of the Ahluwalia Sardar and willingly worked under him. Thus the administration of the whole Doab seemed, at the time, to be passing into the hands of the Sikhs."[2]

Their task was rendered easier since Nadir Shah, in his advance to Delhi, took with himself the major portion of the provincial troops of the Panjab.[3] In the battle of Karnal that followed a large number of Indian troops had been slain, and most of the survivors had disappeared by reason of the disorder and distress. "There were few soldiers in the imperial service," and peace could not be restored.[4]

Such times are always tempting to adventurous spirits, and led by the hope and prospect of plunder large numbers of dare-devils, as well as their old comrades who had converted themselves to Hinduism from fear of Government persecution, joined the Sikh ranks.[5] Their position was thus strengthened and they succeeded almost in every undertaking. Sir Lepel Griffin writes, "Yet while the Sikhs were undoubted robbers, and though cattle lifting was the

[1]"The Sikhs blocked the miscellaneous ways on wayfarers and finding that the officers of Muhammad Shah had suspended their duties and that the administration in cities had fallen into disorder, they took advantage of the time, plundered large parts of the country and carried off booty." Bakhtmal, 57. Cf. Browne, II, 13.

[2]Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, I, 109.

[3]This he did to avoid the danger of any attack from the rear. To secure further safety he had taken as hostages Hayatullah Khan later on known as Shahnawaz Khan, son of Zakariya Khan, and Dalpat Rai, son of the Lahore Minister Lakhpat Rai.

[4]*Chahar Gulzar-e-Shujai*, 373 a.

[5]Bakhtmal, 57.

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one honourable profession amongts them, as on the Scottish border a few hundred years ago, their enthusiasm for their faith, their hatred to the Muhammadans, who had so long trampled them under foot, who had killed their prophets and thrown down their altars, gave them a certain dignity, and to their objects and expeditions an almost national interest."[1]

Sikhs rob Nadir's rear, May, 1739

The Sikhs seem to have grown so bold that they are reported to have fallen upon the rear of Nadir's army on its way back from Delhi and relieved them of a part of their loot from the treasures of the imperial capital. As soon as their scouts brought them the news that Nadir Shah had left Delhi on the 5th May, the Sikh leaders organized a number of light cavalry bands with instructions to hang upon Nadir's flanks and avail themselves of any opportunity of plunder that came in their way. They seized a large amount of booty. Nadir's soldiers being overloaded with the spoil and oppressed by the terrible heat of May, could not pursue them successfully.[2]

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From Sarhind Nadir Shah proceeded along the foot of the Shiwalik hills to avoid the heat of summer. On may 25, 1739 he was at Akhnur on the eastern bank of river Chenab. There he stayed for 40 days, to finalise his departure. Here he was made aware of the losses his rear-guard had sustained on the way. He was very much enraged and made enquiries about the bold plunderers of his army.[3] Ahmad Shah of Batala who compiled his account in the early years of the nineteenth century, reports the following interesting conversation between Nadir Shah and the imperial viceroy Zakariya Khan in reference to the Sikhs:

Nadir—Have you got any troublesome people in the country?

Zakariya—None, except a sect of Hindu *faqirs*, who assemble

[1] *Rajas*, p. 17. Cf. Gordon, pp. 58-59.

[2] Forster, writing about 40 years later, has alluded to this incident in the following words:—"The Sicque forces appeared in arms at the period of Nadir Shah's return from Delhi, when the Persian army, encumbered with spoil, and regardless of order, was attacked in the rear by detached predatory parties of Sicque cavalry, who occasionally fell upon the baggage-guards, and acquired a large plunder." *Journey*, I, 313.

[3] Besides acquiring plunder, the Sikhs are said to have succeeded in liberating a number of Indian boys and girls from the clutches of the invaders. Gian Singh, 623; *Sidq Khalsa*, 250; *Jahankusha*, 244.

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twice to bathe in a tank which they regard as a place of pilgrimage.

Nadir—Where are their places of abode?

Zakariya—Their homes are the saddles on their horses.

Nadir—It seems probable these rebels will raise their head.[1]

Restoration of order after Nadir's departure

Khan Bahadur Zakariya Khan accompanied Nadir Shah up to Akhnur. Here he took leave of the invader who bestowed upon him as a parting gift many favours and a letter of recommendation to his imperial master for promotion.[2] Consequently he was made 8-hazari with the title of saif-ud-daulah II[3] Many historians credit Zakariya Khan with having secured from Nadir Shah the liberation of thousands of captives both Hindus and Muslims; but Khushwaqt Rai and the author of "*Saadat-e-Javid*" would make Lakhpat Rai, his finance minister, share this credit with the Nawab.[4]

Zakariya Khan was faced with a new situation. Nadir's invasion had put the machinery of government out of gear. The Nawab, who was a good and kind ruler, set himself to the task of restoring peace and order in the country and adopted vigorous measures against the lawless people. "Zakariya Khan took active measures for the repopulation of the towns and villages which had been devastated by the ravages of the Sikhs, and made *takavi* advances to the agricultural classes to induce them to resume the cultivation of the land.[5]" Besides, he tried to develop trade and business by establishing several new markets such as Mandi Usman, Mandi Lakha and Mandi Shalimar in Lahore and abolished octroi duties.[6]

Persecution of the Sikhs

The Khan Bahadur was made aware of the proceedings of the Sikhs and thus he believed that the Sikhs were the principal source of danger to the peace and progress of the country. Once again, therefore, he organized moving columns of light cavalry and put

[1]Cf. Sohan Lal, Appendix to Vol. I, 13; Ratan Singh, 282; Gian Singh, 624-7; *Sidq Khalsa*, 251-6; *History of the Sikhs*, I, 184; M'Gregor, I, 115; Gordon, 58.

[2]*Jahankusha*, 244.

[3]Anandran, 85.

[4]*Maasir-ul-Umara*, II, 106-7; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 15a; *Khushwaqt Rai*, 73-4; *Saadate-Javid* in Elliot, VIII, 346; Anandram, 88.

[5]Latif, *Panjab*, 193.

[6]Sohan Lal, I, 103-4 ; Ahmad Shah, 627; Latif, *Punjab*, 193.

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them in motion in pursuit of the Sikhs. Their fort of Dallewal was plundered and razed to the ground. Large numbers of them were shot down, while many others were brought in chains to Lahore where they were executed at a place near the *Nakhas* outside the Delhi gate, which afterwards came to be called *Shahid Ganj.*[1] There were two big mosques near each other. One of them was the scene of Sikh slaughter. After the Sikh occupation of Lahore this mosque was converted into a Gurdwara, and was named Shahid Ganj.[2] Maharaja Ranjit Singh built a samadh opposite Shahid Ganj in memory of Sikh martyrs who were beheaded there. The total number of Sikhs slaughtered at this place might have been about ten thousand by Zakariya Khan. Side by side with the military measures, the Government made use of its civil machinery. Instructions were issued to the local officials and village headmen to permit no Sikh to seek shelter within their jurisdiction. All evasions of these injunctions were severely punished. With renewed diligence, therefore, in the villages and towns, in the fields and woods, spies and informers plied their odious trade. Magistrates, commissioners and officers were once more on the alert.

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When the enterprising Sikh leaders saw this determined attitude of Zakariya Khan, they quitted the Bari Doab and moved on to the Jullundur Doab. The Nawab, accordingly, despatched an experienced officer, Adina Beg Khan, with a large army, in pursuit of them to Jullundur. Adina Beg succeeded in restoring peace and order in the Doab, but he did not take any severe measures to crush the Sikhs and perhaps deliberately winked at some of their activities and permitted them to carry on so long as they refrained from creating serious disturbances in the territory under his charge.[3] The Khan Bahadur, however, could not rest contented till he saw the Sikhs turned out of his province. He issued strict orders to Adina Beg Khan to drive away the Sikhs. Though unwilling to do so, the Julludur *faujdar* could not postpone this task for long.

[1]Ganesh Das, 198; *Tahqiqat-e-Chishti*, 101.

[2]Sohan Lal, I, 103-4; Ahmad Shah, 627; Latif, *Panjab*, 193.

[3]Diwan Bakhtmal on folios 58-9 writes:-"Adina Beg was a greedy man. He did not crush the Sikhs. If he had intended to do so, it was not a difficult task. But he had this idea in his mind that if he quelled the Sikhs, some other contractor might be entrusted with the government of the Doab for a higher sum (of revenue) and he might be dismissed. He, therefore, treated the Sikhs well and settled terms with them. For this reason the Sikhs grew stronger and they gradually occupied many villages as *Jagir*." Cf. Browne, II, 14.

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Consequently, he asked the Sikhs to evacuate his territory. The Sikhs, on receiving these orders, deputed Jassa Singh Thoka (afterwards known as Ramgarhia) as their *vakil* to settle terms with Adina Beg Khan. The latter, however, proved too clever for the Sikh *vakil* and succeeded in persuading him to accept an office under his government. The Sikhs felt dismayed at the conduct of their envoy and found safety only in crossing the Satluj and entering the Sarhind *Sarkar* where they created a serious situation for the Delhi Government as we are given to understand by Harcharandas, who writes:

"In 1740, a year after the departure of Nadir Shah, a large body of Jats and Sikhs assembled, marched towards Sarhind, and created great disturbances. They set up Daranat Shah as their leader, and seized many lands there. When this news was brought to the notice of Emperor Muhammad Shah, he appointed Azimullah Khan to chastise these rebels. Azimullah Khan arrived in that district, defeat ed and dispersed them and then retired to Shahjahanabad."[1]

The Government had now become active, and pressure was being exerted on the Sikhs from all sides. They were, therefore, forced to seek safety in flight. The Government issued for general information a regular schedule of rewards for those who assisted in the work of stamping out the Sikh movement. One who cut off the hair of a Sikh was awarded blankets and bedding. One who supplied information as to the whereabouts of the Sikhs got ten rupees, and one who caught or killed a Sikh received fifty repees. Besides, the plunder of Sikh homes was freely permitted by the Government. On the other hand the person who gave shelter to a Sikh was punished with death and one who did not inform the Government when a Sikh came to him received the same punishment. Any one helping the Sikhs with grain and food was forcibly converted to Islam.[2]

In fact the entire official machinery was set in motion. The village headmen, government officials in rural areas, the non-official gentry

[1]Ali-ud-din, 166 a; *Raj Khalsa*, 10; *Itihas-e-Ramgarhian*, 410-11; *Chahar Gulzar-e-Shujai*, 373 a; Sarkar, *Fall*, I, 422-3.

[2]Ratan Singh, 284-6; Gian Singh, 623. Gordon on p. 50 of his *History of the Sikhs* writes:—"A proclamation was issued by the Lahore Viceroy ordering a general massacre of the long-haired Singhs wherever found. They were hunted like wild beasts, a price being placed on their heads; thousands were put to death, refusing pardon on the condition of renouncing their faith and cutting off their hair." Cf. *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 285.

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of the towns, notable men and zamindars were by force and persuasion, all made to co-operate in this work.

Day by day the sufferings of the Sikhs increased and their number diminished, as men died of starvation, want, fever, heatstroke, cold, wounds and the merciless bullet. They were now obliged to quit the plains of the Panjab and to retire to their famous resorts in the Jammu, Kangra and Hoshiarpur hills, the deserts of Bikaner and Malwa and the Lakhi Jungle. Again, many of them found salvation in giving up the outward symbols of their faith and joining the Hindu fold. Those who had recourse to none of these stratagems generally fell victims to the wrath of the state officers and the greed of their neighbours.[1]

Massa Ranghar

Zakariya Khan was in the habit of enjoying a farce by his court jesters. Once it happened in the rainy season after a heavy downpour of rain. The frogs were croaking and swarms of insects had covered the space all around. One clown said:

God is great! I am looking at these insects. They did not fall with rain water from heaven. Nor were they seen on earth anywhere before rains. Wherefrom have they come in such abundance?

The other joker replied:

They appear when rain, air and earth get chemically mixed up.

Another actor said:

Admitted that the frogs and insects are the result of heavenly water. How is it that these long-haired, giant-limbed, black-faced brutes are seen in plenty in spite of their daily staughter? Which rain gives them birth?

His companion replied:

O fool! As the rain water is responsible for the production of frogs and insects; so does the nectar of Amritsar tank produce Sikhs in abundance.

The Khan Bahadur took the hint. He resolved to stop Sikh gatherings at Amritsar on the days of Baisakhi and Diwali as well as not to permit any Sikh to bathe in the tank. For this purpose he appointed Massa Ranghar in charge of Amritsar. Massa was a bigot and brute both. He belonged to village Mandiala. Amritsar was a small place then. He erected four towers at its corners to

[1]Khushwaqt Rai, 72; Sohan Lal, I, 108-9; Ratan Singh, 327-51; Gian Singh, 44-56; *Sidq Khalsa*, 272-95; Ali-ud-din, 211; Cunningham, 99-100.

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keep a strict watch on the approach of Sikhs. He took his seat inside Hari Mandir where he smoked hubble bubble and spat. Dancing girls gave performance of their craft in that sacred shrine.

On hearing this, Mahtab Singh of Mirankot and Sukha Singh of Mari Kambo vowed to kill Massa. They dressed as Mughal officers, took bags full of round pieces of earthen pots to give an impression that they were bringing revenue, and rode straight to the temple. Nobody suspected them. It was midday in June. People were taking rest. Mahtab Singh entered the temple, cut off Massa's head, and both disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, Mahtab Singh was captured and executed at Lahore, while Sukha Singh went underground.[1]

Taru Singh's execution

The Government was not going to take Massa Ranghar's assassination lying down. It retaliated upon as many Sikhs as possible. Of numerous cases, two stand out most prominently. Taru Singh was a young Jat Sikh of 25, of village Puhla in Majha. He used to help the Sikhs concealed in the jungles with food. He was arrested and brought to Lahore. He was offered the choice of accepting Islam or death. Taru Singh chose the latter alternative. He was tormended by the application of the wheel. His ribs were broken, wrists were strained, joints grew loose, blood gushed out at many places and several bones cracked. For his again refusing to change his faith, his hair with the skin was scrapped off his head.

Yeh Sikh Bahadur sūre,
Apni hath de pūre.
(These brave and bold Sikhs,
Always stick to their resolution.)

Taru Singh's half dead body was made over to the Hindus who removed him to a dharamshala where he passed away after lingering for a few days. His remains were cremated in Shahid Ganj outside the Delhi Gate. It took place on June 25, 1743.[2]

Subeg Singh and Shahbaz Singh

Subeg Singh was a Janbar Jat of Lahore. He studied Persian in a Maktab and Gurmukhi at home. He took up a clerical job in a government office. He served as an interpreter between the govern-

[1]Ratan Singh, 286-91.

[2]Khushwaqt Rai, 72; Sohan Lal, I, 108-9; Ratan Singh, 285-94; 327-51; Gian Singh, 644-56; *Sidq Khalsa*, 272-95; Ali-ud-din, 211; Cunningham, 99-100.

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ment and the Sikhs. He accompanied the deputation which prevailed upon the Sikhs to accept a Jagir and the title of Nawab.

Shahbaz Singh was his son. He was an intelligent lad and learnt Persian and Arabic in a Maktab. As in those days great coflict was going on between the Sikhs and Muslims, his teachers condemned Sikhism. Shahbaz Singh strongly defended Sikhism and criticised Islam.

The matter was immediately reported to the Qazi who delivered the usual judgment, embracing Islam or death. His father approached Zakariya Khan. He was in no mood to favour a Sikh, and refused to interfere in the case. Subeg Singh waited upon the Qazi who declined to listen to him. Subeg Singh used some harsh words. He was immediately arrested and sentenced to accepting Islam or facing death.

Both father and son were subjected to the wheel. On their refusal to change religion, they were hung up by the legs and flogged on bare buttocks. To try their perseverance their flesh was pinched with red hot pincers. Both gave up the ghost uttering *Akal, Akal, Satnam, Satnam.*[1]

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Singh Surā, soi khāave
Gal khanjar nāl katāve
(The brave Sikh is only he,
who offers his head to the sword).

Bota Singh

The Sikhs were exasperated at the cruel execution of their brethren. A Bota Singh, a Sandhu Jat of village Tanko in Majha controlled the road between Amritsar and Taran. He collected a toll at the rate of one anna per cart and only one pice for a donkey. Horses seem to be rare in those days. To a passer by he handed a note addressed to Khan Bahadur. It said:

Chithi likhāi Singh Botā
Hāth hai sotā
Wich rāh khalotā
Ānna lāyā gadde nūn
Paisā lāyā khotā
Ākho Bhābi Khanō nun
Yūn ākhe Singh Botā.

(This letter is dictated by Bota Singh,

[1]Ratan Singh, 321-27; Gian Singh, 634-37; Mulk Raj Bhalla, *Shahid Ganj*, 81-7.

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He holds a big stick in hand,
He stands on the road,
He levies six pice for a cart,
A pice is charged for a donkey;
Tell my sister-in-law Khano (Zakariya Khan),
This is a message from Bota Singh).

Bota Singh was killed in a scuffle with a detachment of Mughal troops sent from Lahore to seize him.[1]

Sikh life in exile

It is said that "theb lood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," and this is proved by the noble and manly testimony of the subsequent Sikh deeds. The thinning of the Sikh ranks by desertion and death did not damp the spirit of the genuine votaries of the Gurus. They were either those persons who had served under the last Guru and Banda or their sons and relatives. They had already seen much, suffered much, and borne much and every fresh oppression and hardship served to purify and invigorate their souls. Discipline, service and sacrifice was the motto placed before them by Guru Gobind Singh, and like true and faithful disciples, they worshipped this ideal. Zakariya Khan's bloody deeds only reminded them that their earthly belongings, bodies and souls were not their own, but the property of the Guru who had merged his personality in the *Panth*, and therefore every sacrifice made in the cause of the Khalsa brotherhood was to bring them the blessing of the Guru and thus to draw them nearer along the path of salvation. They came from that class which in times of disaster is always privileged to suffer. But while they groaned they meditated, while they dreamt they hoped, while they suffered they aspired.

These Sikhs had to experience very hard times. Persecuted, exiled, and tracked down like wild beasts, they kept themselves concealed during the day and came out at night in search of food. They lived on wild plants and fruit and flesh. Day by day their sufferings increased, but they remained firm in their resolution. The miseries and misfortunes of the Sikhs were brought to the notice of Zakariya Khan and from time to time he enjoyed a farce by his court actors giving him an idea of the life and ambition of the Sikhs. On learning that they still cherished hope of seizing the government he exclaimed, "O God! to eat grass and to claim kingship!"[2] During their

[1]Ratan Singh, 296-98; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 76-7.

[2]Khushwaqt Rai, 71.

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days of oppression the Sikhs chose to beguile themselves in their own simple manner. They coined luxurious names for humble things of daily use as also contemptuous expressions for their enemies. The arrival of one Sikh was announced as the advent of a host of one lakh and a quarter, five Sikhs declared themselves an army of five lakhs; death was termed an expedition of the Sikh to the next world; a blind man was called a wide awake hero, a half-blind man was addressed as an argus-eyed lion; a deaf man was a person living in a garret; a hungry man was called mad with prosperity; a stone mortar was named a golden vessel; *sāg* (a cooked preparation of green leaves) was green *pulao*; cooked meat was *mahaprashad*; *pilus* (the fruit of a wild tree) were dry grapes, grams were almonds; onions were silver pieces; to be fined by the *Panth* for some fault was called getting one's salary; to speak was to roar and a *damri* (a copper coin worth one quarter of a pice) was called a rupee. On the other hand, a rupee was nothing but an emptycrust; passing stool was to supply provisions to the Qazi : and wherever they came across night soil they said that a Mughal was lying there. Muslims were called Musla, Swari as Sawara, Kachh as Kachhahra.[1]

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This is a striking feature of the Sikh life at this time, when they were suffering from an acute form of persecution. It shows that pain and suffering had lost all meaning to them and they could still enjoy bubbling humour and brightness and vigour of life. Poverty and hardship served a most useful purpose in uniting them with one another in the closest ties. All differences which arise between man and man in times of peace were effaced beneath the terrible levelling of the oppressor; all men had become brothers and all women sisters. An iron will, an unbent spirit and unbounded enthusiasm for their faith were their rewards of this mode of living. Shakespeare calls hard condition and greatness twin-born.

Another important characteristic of Sikh life in these days was the firm belief of the Sikhs in daily prayers. As their hardship grew greater, the more frequent became their prayers. This exercised a soothing influence on their suffering hearts, and drew them nearer to their ideal. *Ardas*[1] was the famous prayer regularly resorted to by

[1]Ratan Singh, 317; Gian Singh, 629-30; Ali-ud-din, 210 a-b and 364 a. Mir Muhammad Ahsan Ijad quoted by Karam Singh in *Banda Bahadur Kaun Tha*, p. 30 (Urdu). For the full text of Ardas, *see The Sikh Prayer* by Teja Singh, and *Japuji* by Sangat Singh.

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the Sikhs. It reminded them of their goal and the sacrifices already made by the Gurus and other notable Sikhs for the sake of religion. They believed that mercy dropped like gentle dew from heaven.

Sikhs begin to visit Amritsar

The Sikhs in exile, as we have already seen, were firm in their resolution and steady in their will. They were nursing a grudge against the Government on account of their persecution and extermination. They regarded a dip in the holy tank of Amritsar as an essential preliminary to all their undertakings. Accordingly, the more daring among the exiles began to pay visits to the tank and the temple even at the risk of death. Khushwaqt Rai says:—"In the night or at any other time, when they got an opportunity, they bathed (in the tank of Amritsar) with the greatest hurry, fearing and trembling like a frightened prey and then fled in any direction. In such flights, if anybody, out of misfortune, happened to obstruct their progress, he had to lose his life."[1] "According to a contemporary Muhammadan author," says Malcolm, "the Sikh horsemen were seen riding, at full gallop, towards their favourite shrine of devotion. They were often slain in making this attempt, and sometimes taken prisoners; but they used, on such occasions, to seek, instead of avoiding, the crown of martyrdom: and the same authority states, that an instance was never known of a Sikh, taken on his way to Amritsar, consenting to abjure his faith."

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These enterprises of the Sikhs met with such unexpected success that afterwards they made it a regular feature of their life to bathe in the tank and pay homage in the temple at Amritsar, twice a year on the occasions of Baisakhi and Diwali. "Every six months, crowds of the Sikhs resorted to the Holy Tank at Amritsar, and there held council among themselves; they afterwards dispersed, and returned to the jungles. Many of the Zamindars in the Manja tract of country were related to the Sikhs, and concealed the latter when pursued by the Musalmans; and in every village of this jungly tract, there were two or three Sikh horsemen quartered, and supported by the Zamindars, unless when they chose to provide for themselves by robbery and pillage. Thus protected, their apprehension became impracticable."[2]

[1]Khushwaqt Rai, 71; Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, 88; Gordon, 59.
[2]M'Gregor, I, 114-5; Ahmad Shah, 962; Prinsep, 4; *Ibrat Miqal*, 18 a.

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Government policy of relaxation

Zakariya Khan had killed about 10,000 Sikhs, and still they were as active as before. The revenues of the Panjab Government had been constantly falling since 1739 in consequence of the disorders created by the Iranian invasion, the Sikhs and the Viceroy's light cavalry bands. Marching in pursuit of the Sikhs th y had impoverished the peasantry by their extortion, particularly in view of the Government's failure to pay their salaries. When the Sikhs had been driven out of the plains of the Panjab and the normal state of affairs restored in the country, the provincial troops clamoured for their arrears. The treasury of the Government being empty no substantial revenue was forthcoming to meet their requirements. Hence Zakariya Khan threw Diwan Lakhpat Rai into prison for his failure to clear the dues of the army. Jaspat Rai secured the release of his brother Lakhpat Rai on a promise to pay the troops all their dues. He contributed a large sum of money from his personal treasure and then obtained an order from Zakariya Khan to check the accounts of all the court nobles in order to find out if they had paid all their dues to the state. First of all he approached Mir Mumin Khan, the leader of the Turani nobles at the court of Lahore. The Mir refused to allow him to examine the accounts of the proceeds of his lands. The Khan Bahadur administered him a sharp rebuke and the Mir felt so much frightened that he at once paid one lakh of rupees to the state treasury. This example was sufficient to make the other nobles pay large sums to the Governor and thus all the arrears were cleared. Adina Beg Khan and his revenue officer Bhiwani Das were also imprisoned and punished. The latter was half boiled in a large kettle for his failure to disclose the accounts of his master.[1]

To regulate the finances of the province and to set them on a sound footing, it was thought proper to lease out the land to *ijaradars* (farmers of revenue). This measure proved, unwise and impolitic, as it let loose the forces of disorder in all parts of the province on account of the severity and maltreatment of the zamindars by these revenue farmers.[2]

These arrangements had not been in force for long, when the Sikhs again began to make their appearance in the plains of the Panjab and they became so bold as to appraoch Amritsar, in the

[1] *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 51b-52 a.
[2] Ahmad Shah, 838-9. Cf. Karam Singh, 140; M'Gregor, I. 114.

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close vicinity of the provincial capital. It was a new problem for the Government to deal with. The adoption of the old policy meant nothing but the temporary suppression of the Sikhs, involving the risk of creating greater confusion and chaos by the organization of the moving columns of cavalry, incurring a great expense, and ruining the revenues. The Government decided to try a policy of relaxation this time to see if the Sikhs would settle as peaceful peasants in the country. Accordingly, the Sikhs were given no molestation even when they collected in large numbers at Amritsar in April and October, but were only scared away. Khushwaqt Rai writes: "Diwan Lakhpat Rai and some other court nobles were posted at Amritsar at the head of a suitable contingent of troops on the Baisakhi and Diwali days. But the Nawab's orders were such as not to pick up a fight with this sect. They were to connive even if they (Sikhs) started fighting. They were to encamp at Ram Tirath and had to march upon the tank, beating drums, when the fair was at its height, so that the Sikhs might disperse of their own accord for fear of the majesty and awe of the Government. When Khan Bahadur's troops arrived near the tank of nectar some Sikhs took to flight without bathing."[1]

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Story of Zakariya Khan's justice

Harnam Singh, a Saraswat Brahmin, was born in a village near Lahore. His father Gurdas Singh was in the service of the Nawabs of Oudh, and he resided at Malāwanur near Lucknow. Harnam Singh often visited his home village and lived at Lahore when Zakariya Khan was the Viceroy of the Panjab. He was a great scholar of Persian. He wrote a book entitled *Saadat-e-Javid* (Eternal Bliss). Elliot has translated a portion of this book. Harnam Singh describes an interesting story.

There was a Hindu Khatri shopkeeper of Lahore. He had a beautiful and charming young wife. A Hindu washerwoman used to wash her clothes. She also performed the same duty in the house of a big Mughal officer employed at the court of Lahore. The washerwoman told the Mughal about the Khatri's beautiful wife and the officer fell violently in love with her.

He gave the washerwoman a large sum of money and promised more if she could help him in securing the Khatrani. He sent messages and presents through the washerwoman, but the chaste

[1]Khushwaqt Rai, 71.

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lady rejected all his advances.

The Mughal laid a plot to get possession of the Khatrani. He would drive in a covered carriage towards the street in which she lived and would return. This was repeated a number of times. Then he announced that he was going to marry a Hindu girl. He distributed sweets in his neighbourhood, and fixed a day for the marriage. A costly dress meant for a Muslim bride with a veil was given to the washerwoman. She tied these clothes together with the Khatrani's clothes in a bundle and took them to the Khatrani's house on the same evening which the Mughal had fixed for his marriage. The washerwoman concealed the bride's dress in a safe place in the Khatrani's house.

The washerwoman knew that the Khatrani's husband would be away on business for a few days. It was on one of such days that the Mughal had fixed his marriage ceremony. The same evening at nightfall his carriage again came to the neighbourhood of the Khatrani's house. The Mughal performed his marriage with a slave girl covered in a veil in the presence of a large gathering of Muslims. The Qazi of the capital performed the marriage ceremony. He entertained the leading officers and gentry to a grand feast, and distributed sweets on a lavish scale in his Mohalla and among the poor.

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The next day at the head of a large gang of ruffians the Mughal came to the gate of the Khatri's house and demanded the woman. He declared that she had renounced Hinduism and embraced Islam. She had been coming to his house and the previous night had publicly married him. Now she was his legal wife, and he would seize her forcibly. At this statement the Mughal's companions raised a hue and cry and demanded the woman immediately without any further delay. They threatened to carry off the lady by force.

The Mohalla people gathered in a large number and pacified the Mughal by saying that they should be allowed to make inquiries into the matter. The headman of the Mohalla and a few leading residents entered the house and deputed a couple of women to ask the truth from the lady concerned. The poor woman was beside herself with grief and in tears, lamentations and sobs proclaimed her innocence. At this report the Mughal shouted that after the marriage she had been left here in her bridal dress which must be lying there in her house.

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On a search being made the bundle of the bridal clothes with some presents was found inside. At this discovery everybody was stunned. The women of the Mohalla again put questions to the lady. She said that previously the washerwoman had spoken to her about the Mughal and she had reprimanded her. She also brought the last wash the previous evening and the bundle must have been placed in the house by her.

Thereupon the leading Khatris of the town reported the matter to Diwan Lakhpat Rai, a Khatri, the Chief Minister of Panjab under Zakariya Khan. The Mughal also filed a complaint in the court of the Qazi who at once delivered the judgment in favour of the Mughal. A police party was sent to seize the woman and hand her over to the Mughal. The Hindu citizens filed an appeal to the Viceroy under whose orders the execution of the Qazi's judgment was stayed only for a day.

Zakariya Khan was in a dilemma. He was under hard pressure from the Qazi whose decision in religious matters was final. But his sense of justice compelled him to get at the truth. He was in the habit of visiting the town all alone and without informing others. On this occasion he disguised himself as a Muslim *faqir* and left his palace by the backdoor. First he went to the Mohalla of the Khatris. There he saw a group of *faqirs* sitting in a corner. He also sat nearby. One of them was addressing the others. He said:

"Friends, we have observed this woman for a long time, and we have always found her conduct faithful, modest and chaste. How could it be that she went to the Mughal and was married to him? God knows what deception has been practised."

The Viceroy then went to the quarter in which the Mughal was residing. To a person in that street he said:

"Brother, tell me the house of the Mughal where the marriage took place recently. I am hungry and I wish to beg some food."

"Damn that Mughal" was the reply. "He is a scoundrel, liar and impostor. We never saw the wife of the Khatri coming to his house."

Zakariya Khan came back home. Next morning the washerwoman was summoned to the Court. At first she expressed her innocence. When put to torture, she confessed her guilt. She said that she had been paid a large sum of money to place the bridal apparel amongst the Khatrani's clothes, and that the Mughal was actually

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married to one of her slave girls. Zakariya Khan put both the Mughal and the washerwoman to death. Many stories like this of the justice of the Viceroy were prevalent in Lahore. Harnam Singh concludes: 'May God forgive him his sins!'[1]

What rein can hold licentious wickedness
When down the hill he holds his fierce career? —Shakespeare

Zakariya Khan dies, 1st July, 1745

It is very interesting to note that throughout the period of their struggle for independence, the Sikhs were afforded unforeseen opportunities to rise after every attempt of the Government to annihilate them. Zakariya Khan died on the 1st July, 1745. He was the last of the most popular Governors of the Panjab, an able and just ruler who commanded respect from Hindus and Muslims alike. His death plunged the whole country into grief.[2]

Appointment of a Panjab Viceroy delayed

On Zakariya Khan's death, the Delhi Wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan appointed Zakariya Khan's real brother Abdullah to officiate. This man tried to make the best of this opportunity for his selfish ends. He fleeced money both from Hindus and Sikhs. His oppressive policy was expressed by the people in the following saying: *Hakumat Nawab Abdullah, Na chakki rahi na chulha.*[3] During the rule of Nawab Abdullah people lost their grinding stones and hearths.

He then advised the Emperor to give the Lahore province to Yahiya Khan and that of Multan to Shahnawaz Khan,[4] the sons of the late viceroy. Muhammad Shah did not like to make the Panjab a stronghold of the Turani party and rejected this proposal. The Wazir was determined to keep the Panjab in his family and he secretly sent Yahiya Khan to take charge of his father's government. Shahnawaz also arrived at Lahore soon after and demanded a complete division of his patrimony. This settlement was delayed

[1]Harnam Singh, *Saadat-e-Javid*, in Elliot and Dowson, VIII, 336-54.

[2]Cf. *Saadat-e-Javid* in Elliot, VIII, 336-54; Anandram, 139; Khushwaqt Rai, 74; Sohan Lal, I, 109; Ahmad Shah, 836; Ibrat Miqal, 54b; Sarkar, Fall, I, 191.

[3]*Tahqiqat-e-Chishti*, 648.

[4]Zakariya Khan left behind him three sons; Yahiya Khan, Shahnawaz Khan and Mir Baqi. They were all Qamr-ud-din's sister's sons, while Yahiya Khan, was his son-in-law also.

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and the troops of both the brothers came to blows. Peace was in the end patched up. Shahnawaz Khan was paid a certain amount of cash and jewels, whereupon he withdrew to his *faujdari* in the Jullundur Doab. The Wazir begged the viceroyalty of the Panjab for himself. After long hesitation and persuasion the Emperor agreed and appointed Yahiya Khan the Deputy Governor on January 3, 1746.[1]

The Sikhs revive their strength

In view of the growing trouble of the Sikhs it was essential that a strong and permanent viceroy should be appointed in the Panjab. The delay in such a serious matter and the hostilities between Yahiya Khan and Shahnawaz Khan resulted in destroying the peace and prosperity of the province. Disturbances cropped up everywhere. On the one hand the Raja of Jammu revolted and stopped paying tribute, while on the other the Sikhs created serious trouble.[2] The situation was further worsened by the discontent of the Jat peasantry of the Majha. They were ground down between the two millstones of oppression. Heavy exaction by the revenue officials[3] and maltreatment by the military contingents roaming about in search of Sikhs brought them nothing but ruin and dishonour.

The quiet and industrious Jats, so long as they were left to themselves by the Government, remained contented with their life as cultivators of the field and never concerned themselves with the affairs of their neighbours. But the tyranny of their rulers forced them to look towards the lawless Sikhs who apparently enjoyed every necessity of life. It is no wonder that they were tempted by the easier pursuit of robbery than by their own life of toil and trouble. Consequently, they took to rapine and plunder and as a bond of union sought fusion with the Sikhs. Their adoption of the new faith proclaimed that the ploughshare had been beaten into the avenger's sword. "The spirit of the revived sect," says Prinsep "displayed itself at first in secret association and isolated acts of depredation. Bodies of armed men in tens and twenties, called *Dharwee* in the dialect of the province, that is, highwaymen, infested the routes of communication, attacked villages or plundered towns, according

[1]Anandram, 289-95; *Bayan*, 160; Ashub, II, 451; *Siyar*, III, 12; Sarkar, I, 192-3.

[2]Anandram, 289. Cf. Sarkar, I, 193.

[3]Cf. Bute Shah, 255b.

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as their local connections invited to either mode of seeking wealth or the means of support. The early neglect of the ruling authority enabled the associations to prosper, and the most successful chiefs purchased horses with the proceeds of their spoil, and mounted and armed their followers. Their example and success made the cause popular with the young and adventurous so that the number who took to these courses augmented daily until the chiefs formed their respective *dehras* or encampments in open defiance of the ruling authority, and sought celebrity by bold and hardy enterprizes, which gave security in the awe they inspired, while the wealth and reputation resulting afforded the means of further strengthening themselves."[1] People of all ranks and ages flocked in. Young lads were attracted to this life of independence either by a noble enthusiasm or by natural restlessness. Old men were brought together again by the renown of their successful exploits. Mingled with all these came many more who were seeking for licence and impunity amidst this confusion. Thus the sturdy, plodding race of hereditary cultivators, whose diligence had built up the agricultural system of the Panjab, became as skilful in the use of the sword as they were in the use of the plough.

Anandram of Lahore then present in the Panjab writes: 'Lawless men, plunderers and adventurers (who had so long kept themselves in hiding) now peeped out of their holes and began to desolate the realm plundering the cities and villages and ruining families. The peace and prosperity given by the just rule of Zakariya Khan were destroyed. The disorder is raging throughout this province even at the time of my writing this, 23 August, 1746—one year, one month and twenty-three days after Zakariya Khan's death.'[2]

Sikhs organize themselves into regular fraternities

It was about this time that the Sikhs felt the need of organizing themselves into small bands. They had to defend their person and property against a tyrannical Government. In order to popularize their faith, the needs of the individuals who were daily joining them had to be attended to. Their relations and friends leading peaceful lives in villages had to be protected, and those who opposed them had to be silenced. To follow a systematized course of plunder a plan of action had to be prepared. Weapons and provisions had to

[1]Prinsep, 3. Cf. Ahmad Shah, 839-40.
[2]Anandram, 150-1.

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be got ready. In a word organisation was needed.

It seems probable that the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar, their holiest place of pilgrimage, on the occasion of the first Diwali after the death of Zakariya Khan, which fell on 14th October, 1745, took advantage of the confused state of affairs at the provincial capital, to declare their new organisation after a *Gurmata*. They divided themselves into 25 groups, each consisting of about 100 persons.[1]

These associations were united not only by religious ties but also by common interest, and therefore a system of general confederation for defence as well as for operations requiring more than single efforts, came into existence.

Fighting and riding were the only qualifications required from an individual who came to seek recruitment under a chief, and the possession of a horse and a matchlock was his best recommendation, though in many cases they were assured of these things by the leader from the proceeds of his spoil. But such was the enthusiasm of these new zealots that being impatient of possessing a horse they did not wait for the expeditions, but stole money from home, bought a horse and joined a Sikh band.[2]

The followers demanded nothing from the chief except protection and permission to plunder. There was no question of pay. The Sikh religion at this time, being a pure theocracy,[3] allowed no distinction

[1]This seems to be the first *Gurmata* regularly passed by the Sikhs after a long period of persecution. This wonderful institution gave each individual a personal share in the government, and thus placed within the reach of every Sikh the attainment of rank and influence.

Gian Singh, 664-5. The following are the names of the leaders of these groups. Shyam Singh of Naroke in Sialkot district. *Rajas of the Punjab*, 464, f.n. Gurbakhsh Singh of Kalsia. *Chiefs and Families of Note*, 83. Karora Singh of Paijgarh. *Rajas of the Punjab*, 464, f.n. Karam Singh of Paijgarh. Gurdayal Singh of Dallewal. Nodh Singh and Chanda Singh of Sukar Chak. *Punjab Chiefs*, 11. Kala Singh and Khiyala Singh of Kang. Dharam Singh Khatri of Bhatchang. Bagh Singh. *Punjab Chiefs*, 386. Jassa Singh. *Rajas of the Punjab*, 455. Hari Singh. *Punjab Chiefs*, 385. Chhajja Singh of Panjwar. Dip Singh. *Chiefs and Families of Note*, 218. Bhuma Singh. *Punjab Chiefs*, 385. Nawab Kapur Singh of Faizullahpur. *Punjab Chiefs*, 321; *Rajas of the Punjab*, 461. Jai Singh of Kanah Kachha. *Punjab Chiefs*, 315. Sada Singh, *Sudh Singh Dodia—Punjab Chiefs*, 386. Hira Singh Nakai. *Punjab Chiefs*, 119. Aghar Singh. Sukha Singh. Madan Singh. Bir Singh Mazahabi. Karam Singh of Narli near Amritsar. *Punjab Chiefs*, 178. Cf. Khushwaqt Rai, 81; *Tarikh-i-Sidhu*, 127; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 78.

[2]Cf. Bute Shah, 308a.

[3]Cf. Ali-ud-din, 158 a-b.

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of rank or position among its adherents. The members of a band, whether old or new, were meted out equal treatment by the leader as well as by the whole body of the Khalsa. The plunder collected during an expedition was divided among the chiefs according to the number of their followers, each of whom received an equal share of the booty.

This organisation served the most useful purpose of producing leaders in abundance. Such heroes whose valour and ability directed the efforts of their suffering followers to a just though harsh revenge, arose in large numbers. These leaders were not created by some high authority but came to occupy this position as a matter of course, on account of their natural ability. If a Sikh, of however humble an origin he might be, possessed a daring spirit, ability to lead, quick perception, rapid decision, and undaunted courage, he was sure to gather round himself a number of followers.

The men of leading and independent spirit would secede from their old groups and easily form their own bands. This process was encouraged by the Khalsa brotherhood, and career was thrown open to military talent. Almost every village produced a sardar who attracted free-lances from the neighbourhood to join him.

This organisation into regular bands may be taken as a significant starting point in the military career of the Sikhs. They had decided to carry on the war in guerilla bands, because they had realised that this form of warfare was the most effective and the least dangerous, and that success depended upon having confidence in their leader and reliance upon their comrades. This changed the character of the Sikh resistance. Not only did it make them a power to face their foes and to practise plunder, but it also gave them an idea of organizing a multitude of plunderers into some sort of rude cavalry regiments which ultimately proved of immense value. It was enlarged and further developed and formed the basis of the first regularly organized national army of the community, popularly known as the Dal Khalsa, which we are going to study in the following chapter.[1]

[1]Cf. Malcolm, 89; McGregor, *History of the Sikhs*, I, 186; Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, 16; Gordon, 59-60 and 70.

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CHAPTER 4

The Dal Khalsa, 1745-1748

The Sikh aggressions

Under the impulse of a few successes which the Sikhs scored in their new role, they determined to punish their enemies. They now raided the villages of Naushahra and Majitha and others, and killed Sahib Rai, Rama Randhawa, Karma Chhina, Harbhagat Niranjaniya, Qazi Fazil Ahmad Khan, Khokhar Shamshir Khan and many other *chaudharis* and *muqaddams*, who had rendered active help to the Government against them. The towns of Batala, Jullundur, Talwan, Bijwara, Dhag, Manjki and Phagwara were also laid waste.[1]

These early successes led the Sikhs to undertake a bolder adventure. A band[2] of their daring youths disguised themselves as Mughal soldiers entered the town of Lahore by the Mochi Gate, one evening, in the month of January. This being the coldest month in the year, the people of the city had retired to their houses early. The streets were almost deserted and the dim lights inside the shops and houses failed to disclose the identity of the intruders. The plunderers blocked all exits, put the shopkeepers to the sword, and loading their horses with booty immediately disappeared. Before they left the town, some of the party managed to slay the *qazis* and the *muftis* living in that quarter, as they had been instrumental in the punishments awarded to the Sikh captives.[3]

Jaspat Rai slain by the Sikhs, c. March, 1746

After plundering Lahore the Sikhs joined the rest of their body lying concealed in the jungle on the banks of the Ravi. It was a dreary and arduous task for the pursuing Mughal troops with their loose trousers to pass through the thorny bushes over a marshy

[1]Gian Singh, 664; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 78.

[2]Gian Singh places this number at 5,000, evidently an exaggeration.

[3]Gian Singh, 661-2.

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soil where the legs of the horses sank in the mud.[1]

Yahiya Khan, the Lahore Governor, on learning what had taken place in the Mochi gate bazar of his capital, ordered Diwan Lakhpat Rai to take immediate action against the Sikhs. The Diwan sent a strong detachment of cavalry who succeeded in expelling the Sikhs from their swampy haunts and they fled towards Eminabad. Jaspat Rai, brother of Lakhpat Rai, who was *faujdar* of Eminabad, lay encamped at village Khokharan, 25 kms distant. The residents of Gondlanwala approached him complaining that 2,000 Sikh horsemen had suddenly fallen upon the village, and after driving away the flocks of sheep and goats of the village were slaughtering and eating them at Rori Baba Nanak. The Diwan sent them word to return the goats to their owners and to depart immediately. The Sikhs gave him a reply that they had gone without food for the last two or three days and they expected to leave the place the next morning. The *faujdar* again sent them strict orders to disperse at once. But the Sikhs would not move. Then Jaspat mounted on an elephant launched an attack on the Sikhs with whatever troops he had with him. The Sikhs offered a stubborn resistance. During the course of the action, a Rangretta Sikh named Nibahu Singh, caught hold of the tail of Jaspat's elephant, leapt up like lightning and cut off the head of the *faujdar*. This was the signal for a general stampede of the troops.[2]

Lakhpat Rai's massacre of the Sikhs or Chhota Ghallughara, c. April—June, 1746

On receiving the news of his brother's tragic end, Diwan Lakhpat Rai swore vengeance on the Sikhs. He is reported to have taken a vow to destroy the Khalsa root and branch. With the approval

[1]As to the date of this event a word of explanation is necessary. All authorities agree that Jaspat Rai's murder took place when his brother Lakhpat Rai was the minister of Lahore and that he wreaked a thorough vengeance on the Sikhs for Jaspat's blood. He held this office from 1720 to 21st March 1747, and served under Abdus Samad Khan, Zakariya Khan and Yahiya Khan, Ratan Singh on p. 372 places this incident in 1804 Samvat Bikrami (28th February 1747 to 27th February 1748) and Gian Singh's date on p. 665 is April, 1748. Both these dates are evidently wrong. Ali-ud-din on folio 105b and Khushwaqt Rai on folio 74 put it in the reign of Yahiya Khan who was in office upto 21st March, 1747. Following these two authorities I have accepted the date of Karam Singh. Cf. *Phulwari*, October, 1928, p. 988; Ratan Singh, 373.

[2]Ali-ud-din, 105 a-b; Ratan Singh, 374; Gian Singh, 665.-6; Khushwaqt Rai,

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of Yahiya Khan he arrested all the Sikhs of Lahore and slaughtered them at Shahid Ganj. The noted persons of Lahore such as Kaura Mal, Kunjah Mal, Dila Ram, Hari Ram, Kashmiri Mal, Surat Singh, Har Singh, Bhai Des Raj and Chaudhari Jawahir Mal formed a deputation and waited upon Lakhpat Rai to dissuade him from shedding blood of innocent persons, particularly so on the sacred day of *Amawash* (9 April). Lakhpat Rai did not listen to them, burnt the holy book of the Sikhs and demolished their places of worship.[1]

The general body of the Sikhs had taken shelter in the swamps of the upper course of the Ravi. Yahiya Khan and Lakhpat Rai personally marched in their pursuit. The Sikhs, keeping themselves concealed in the jungle, moved up the right bank of the Ravi into the north-eastern corner of the province. Several skirmishes took place in which the Sikhs were worsted because they were helpless against light artillery. At last they advanced in the direction of Kahnwan on the right bank of the old Beas, 15 kms south of Gurdaspur where there was a thick forest abounding in wild animals.

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The Sikhs maintained a guerilla warfare by concealing themselves in the day and harassing the enemy in the night. But their strength had begun to dwindle. They were running short of provisions and ammunition. The wild game had grown scarce. Many were dying of starvation and wounds. A number of parents by securing pardon from Lakhpat Rai persuaded their sons to cut off their hair, to relinquish all other symbols of Sikhism and to revert to Hinduism. Others who had joined the Khalsa ranks for the sake of plunder came back, and resumed their peaceful avocations. But those who were true to the new religion remained steadfast.

Being extremely hard-pressed, the Sikhs one night decided to give their enemies the slip under cover of darkness. A few of them who were ready to lay down their lives for their brethren raised loud shouts of "*Wah Guru ji ka Khalsa, Wah Guru ji ki Fatah*," and fearlessly dashed into the ranks of their foes. This attracted the whole force of Lakhpat Rai to that particular spot and the other Sikhs suc-

74. Baba Kirpa Ram, the religious preceptor of the Diwan, bought the head of Jaspat Rai from the Sikhs for a ransom of Rs. 500 and cremated it at Eminabad where a *smadh* (tomb) was built by Lakhpat Rai and where a well attached to it still exists.

[1]Ali-ud-din, 105 a-b. Cf. Khushwaqt Rai, 72.

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ceeded in escaping towards Parol Kathua.[1]

Lakhpat Rai, however, was soon upon them with definite instructions to all the chiefs, *chaudharis* and *lambardars* to co-operate with him. The hill people were to obstruct their progress in the north and to drive them away towards the plains, while the residents of the country along the foot of the hill were to cut off all ways of escape.

The hot pursuit on all sides compelled them to retreat and halt on the spurs of the Basohli hills (between Pathankot and Dalhousie on the Ravi) where the river swept through a deep bed between high banks. Here the Sikhs were brought to bay with the enemy behind them, precipitous mountains in front, a hostile population all around, and a swift river flowing to their left.

Some Sikhs wanted to escape by crossing the river, but they were prevented from doing so by the strong current which foamed below between sloping rocky banks of the river. Two of the young Dallewalia Sikhs jumped into the river to see if it could be crossed, but none of them was seen again. The Sikhs tried to ascend the hill which was in some parts perpendicular, and in others irregular in slope, but they made little progress over this steep and slippery ground. Some of them succeeded in reaching the top but the bullets and stones of the hill men made short work of them. The Sikhs, therefore, gave up all these attempts and hid themselves in all possible places which they could find. One dark night they swam across river Ravi and entered the Bari Doab.[2]

Khushwaqt Rai gives a graphic account of their sufferings. He writes that the enemy entering into every cave and crevice frightened them out and drove them into the plains towards Batala. All exits being blocked, Lakhpat Rai and Yahiya Khan fell on them and put four hundred Sikhs to the sword on the spot; while about the same number of them were taken captives. Many Sikhs fell into the river Ravi, while a number of them jumped into a well to save their lives. Some of them cut off their hair in the twinkling of an eye and escaped in this changed appearance. Among the captives all those who shaved their heads and beards were allowed to depart; while the hair of others was pulled off with their skin, and they were put to death with a thousand tortures. Scouts and military contingents roamed about in search of them, killing every Sikh they came ac-

[1]Parol stands on the Baju river about 24 kms north-west of Pathankot and Kathua on the Ravi 11 kms east of Parol.

[2]Ratan Singh, 392-3.

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ross. Lakhpat Rai set five rupees as the price for every Sikh head. The Sikh ranks consequently thinned every day by desertion and death.

The Sikhs who had escaped this massacre ran towards the Beas which flowed at a distance of about 30 kms, fighting their way valiantly against their pursuers. They again suffered terribly in the passage of the Beas, a vivid picture of which is presented by Ratan Singh. He says that Lakhpat Rai overtook them when they reached the Beas. It was mid-day in the month of June. The river was flooded (from the melting of snow on the mountains). The enemy was in hot pursuit. No boats were available. The Sikhs prayed to the Guru and jumped into the river at Goindwal.[1] When they reached the opposite bank, they came upon a deep bed of sand 3 kms long. They were already dying of hunger and fatigue and the pain of their wounds, and now the burning sand added to their torture. They tore out their turbans, tied the pieces to their feet and thus managed to cross it. In the Jullundur Doab they halted near a village. They had hardly begun to cook their food when Adina Beg Khan suddenly fell upon them. They also received the news of Lakhpat Rai's having crossed the Beas. So they gave up cooking, started fighting and piercing through Adina's troops reached the Satluj. Having crossed it at Tihara and applying cold water compresses on the way, they arrived in Malwa with great difficulty, while Lakhpat Rai returned to Lahore.[2] The Malwa Sikhs sympathised with their brethren of the Majha and offered them their homes and nursed their wounds with care and devotion. The leaders with their surviving associates halted at different places. Sukha Singh stayed at Jaito, Jassa Singh at Kot Kapura, Kapur Singh at Dhing Wanjhuke, Hari Singh at Dyalpur, Charat Singh at Pakka Pathrala, while Dip Singh with his devoted band retired to the Lakhi Jungle and many other Sikhs stayed at Tihara and in the neighbourhood of Daroli.[2]

In this campaign seven to eight thousand[3] Sikhs were killed and captured. The captives were brought to Lahore, dressed in paper caps and mounted on camels, and were beheaded at Shahid Ganj.

[1]The ferry of Goindwal was used for crossing the Beas till M'Gregor's time about the middle of the nineteenth century. It was situated on the high road to Lahore about 8 kms beyond the present city of Kapurthala. Cf. *History of the Sikhs*, I, p. 5.

[2]Ratan Singh, 389-90: Gian Singh, 678.

[3]40,000 according to Ratan Singh p. 394 and 7,000 as Gian Singh states on p.

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Lakhpat Rai also issued a proclamation at the same time threatening to rip open the belly of any one taking the name of the Guru.[1] He prohibited calling sugar-cane molasses '*Gur*' because it sounded as '*Guru*' and ordered the people to name it '*Rori*' which is still current in the Panjab.[2]

Such strong measures checked the progress of Sikhism for the time being. The enthusiasm of the votaries of the Guru decreased considerably, and a large number of them who had joined their ranks more for the sake of plunder and love of dare-devilry than for their devotion to the Khalsa faith now began to desert the Khalsa Panth. Lakhpat had the satisfaction of wreaking a thorough vengeance for his brother's death.

Civil war between Zakariya Khan's sons, 21st November, 1746—21st March, 1747

The sufferings of the Khalsa were not, however, destined to continue very long, while retribution for Lakhpat Rai and an opportunity for the Sikhs were soon at hand. After about five months, Yahiya's younger brother Shahnawaz Khan rose in insurrection against him. He came to Lahore on the 21st November, 1746, encamped near the Shalimar Garden and through Diwan Surat Singh called upon Yahiya Khan to make a complete division of his father's property. Adina Beg Khan, Kaura Mal and Hashmatullah Khan also joined him.

Yahiya Khan was not willing to pay him anything, while at the same time he avoided fighting. The discussion was prolonged and no decision was arrived at. The soldiers of both the brothers often came to blows At last Yahiya Khan, with all his old and new chiefs such as Mumin Khan, Lakhpat Rai, Mir Ne'mat Khan and Mir Amin Beg, etc. came out of Lahore and a sharp engagement took place. Yahiya Khan then ended the dispute by paying Shahnawaz Khan Rs. 600,000 from his father's treasure. The latter, thereupon, retired towards Batala where he seized many districts belonging to Yahiya Khan and brought a number of neighbouring chiefs under his subjugation.

678. The former view is evidently exaggerated while the latter seems to be nearer correctness.

[1]Ali-ud-din, 105b-106a. Cf. Prinsep, 4-5; Ratan Singh, 376-95; Gian Singh, 667-79.

[2]Ratan Singh, 378.

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This annoyed the Lahore Viceroy and he prepared for another fight. Shahnawaz, on hearing of it, came to Lahore and encamped near the tomb of Hazrat Ishan. The battle began on the 17th March, 1747. Adina Beg led the attack and succeeded in forcing Mumin Khan out of his trenches. Next day Shahnawaz delivered the assault in person. Mir Mumin was defeated and captured. Yahiya's soldiers whose salaries had been in arrears for the past four or five months since the commencement of hostilities, flocked into the city and clamoured for the payment of their dues. They were easily seduced by Shahnawaz Khan. He entered Lahore quite unopposed on the 21st March, seized the property of Yahiya and took him captive.

Shahnawaz Khan established himself securely in the office of the Panjab Viceroy "by removing from their posts all the old captains who had grown grey-haired in the service of his father and grandfather, and confiscated their houses and property." He nominated Kaura Mal as his Diwan in the place of Lakhpat Rai and confirmed the vigorous Governor Adina Beg Khan in the civil and military charge of the Jullundur Doab.[1]

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Recovery of strength by the Sikhs, November, 1746—March, 1747

The civil war between the sons of Zakariya Khan which commenced in the month of November, 1746 resulted in the dislocation of the governmental machinery. This period not only gave the Sikhs much needed respite to recover their strength, but also proved favourable for their further rise. The training of the Khalsa in the school of adversity had produced that keen insight in them which is a rare gift of nature for enabling one to take the best advantage of one's opportunities. The short interval of five months (July-November) while they were in Malwa had healed their wounds and calmed the horrors of the late war. At the outbreak of the civil war they left their retreats and started paying visits to Amritsar. This was considered to serve a double purpose. The bathing in the sacred tank and prayers in holy shrine of Harimandir would elevate their depressed spirits, enhance their enthusiasm and secure the blessings of the Guru. In the second place, it was to serve them as a rendezvous. Most of their co-religionists had scattered far and wide

[1]Sarkar, I, 194-95. Kaura Mal was the son of Wallu Mal Khatri of Multan whose father and grandfather had been in the service of the Multan Governors. Shan Yusaf, 55a., Anandram, 289-95, 304; *Tarikh-i-Muzaffari*, 3 a-b; Ashub, II, 451-2; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 55 a; Sohan Lal, I, 113-4; Ali-ud-din, 106b, Khushwaqt Rai, 76.

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under the tyrannous rule of Yahiya Khan and it was essential to rally all the forces of the *Panth* before entering upon a fresh career.

The Muslim officials of the district were made aware of this move of the Sikhs. The Mughal *faujdar* of Amritsar erected four towers at the four corners of the tank with a view to keeping a sharp look-out on the Sikhs coming there to bathe. Armed police was posted there day and night with orders to shoot every Sikh, approaching the tank. Sukha Singh, a prominent Sikh volunteered himself to take the lead and resolved to bathe there in broad daylight. He dressed himself in Turkish uniform, came to the tank at mid-day, had a dip and went away showing his identity by taking off his turban. His example was followed by other Sikhs and soon the Khalsa of daring spirit began to pour into their holy city in groups of tens and twenties. This news quickly spread all over the country and the other Sikhs who had exchanged their swords for the ploughshare soon began to flock to the Khalsa ranks for the sake of acquiring rich booty. Their venture met with great success, because the district officer of Amritsar had to withdraw to Lahore in view of his scanty resources to cope with the serious situation, and perhaps the presence of his troops was required to fight on the side of Yahiya Khan.

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The different bands of the Sikhs then sallied out of Amritsar and fell upon the Bari and Rechna Doabs like birds of prey. They let loose their vengeance to have its full play on the Government officials especially those who had persecuted them. They soon succeeded in acquiring an immense booty thus replenishing their exhausted stores and fully equipping themselves with arms, ammunition, horses and other necessaries.[1]

The Sikhs build the fort of Ram Raun at Amritsar, c. 30th March, 1747

In the struggle between Zakariya Khan's sons Shahnawaz Khan had defeated his elder brother Yahiya Khan together with Diwan Lakhpat Rai and Mir Mumin Khan, all of whom had been imprisoned by him. Shahnawaz, as has already been remar ed, had appointed Kaura Mal his Diwan and confirmed Adina Beg Khan in the *faujdari* of the Jullundur Doab. Kaura Mal was a Khulasa Sikh[2] (believer in Guru Nanak's religion without having adopted the tenets of

[1]Ratan Singh, 313-4; Gian Singh, 682.

[2]Forster, I, 314; Malcolm, 91; Ratan Singh, 397.

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Guru Gobind Singh), while Adina Beg Khan had inclinations towards the Sikhs from policy. Out of regard for their patron who occupied the highest authority next to the Viceroy in the Panjab, the Sikhs decided to bring their plundering activities to a stand-still, more so because they really needed a breathing time and leisure to recoup. The Government of Shahnawaz Khan was also not yet stable and his two advisers Kaura Mal and Adina Beg saw advantage in advising the new Governor to let the Sikhs alone. Naturally when the Sikhs had no interference from the Government and when they wished to recoup, they were quiet.

In view of the approaching Baisakhi festival which was to fall on the 30th March all the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar, their religious capital, where they celebrated the occasion with great pomp and show after a long, stormy period of about twelve years. On this day a general assembly of the Khalsa was convened in which a *Gurmata* was passed to the effect that a fort should be erected at Amritsar. This wise step was taken because some work had to be provided for the Sikhs who did not want to go to their homes and who could not reconcile themselves to a life of inactivity after having been diligently employed for a long time. Moreover, they were not sure how long they were destined to enjoy peace with the Government in those troublous times.

In spite of the two disadvantages, that Amritsar was situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the provincial capital (50 kms north of Lahore), and that it stood on the Grand Trunk Road, thus falling on the way of forces marching between Lahore and Delhi, it was selected as the future site of their military capital as well. There were several factors in favour of such a choice. It was considered by the Sikhs as 'the Guru's Kashi' and it was believed that any Sikh who died there would go straight to heaven. It stood in the centre of the Majha, their real home, surrounded on all sides by a thick forest of *Palas* trees, and thus they could count on a friendly population and a safe retreat in times of emergency. Besides they could closely watch the policy of the Lahore court and the movements of its forces.

The Sikhs started the work of construction after the festival was over. Its foundation was laid near another holy tank named Ramsar, about 3 kms distant from Hari Mandir. A two metres wide foundation was dug. The Sikhs themselves were the masons, carpenters and labourers. All the four walls of the fort were started at the same time and special provision was made for the gates and towers. A

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deep and wide ditch was excavated around the fort. It was named 'Rauni' and the fort was called 'Ram Rauni'[1] (God's shelter). It was a small, mud-built fort with an accommodation for 500 men. The reason for such a small undertaking seems to be the idea of not rousing the jealousy of the Government officials. It was a fort for them; but it looked like the house of a zamindar securely built and properly protected, the more so because it had extensive fields on all sides in which wheat, gram and mustard were cultivated in winter and fodder in summer. After the completion of the fort, the Sikhs began to beautify the temple and the tank. Hari Singh Bhangi was also allowed to establish his *Katra* or residential quarters in the vicinity of the tank of nectar.

Shahnawaz Khan's government

Having placed his brother in confinement, Shahnawaz Khan usurped the government of the province in March, 1747. The new Governor is described by all contemporary writers as a man of intemperate habits and bloodthirsty character. The author of *Tarikh-e-Muhammad Shāhi* depicts him even more cruel than Nadir Shah. His administration was marked by excessive tyranny and oppression. He would often inflict very severe and inhuman punishments for trivial faults. The amputation of limbs and putting out of eyes was not uncommon. We are given to understand by several writers that the Nawab's cruel administration drove a good many peasants from peaceful pursuits to lawless habits.[2]

The usurpation of the Panjab Government could not be brooked by the Delhi court, but no drastic action was taken against Shahnawaz Khan because Wazir Qamar-ud-din Khan first wanted to secure the release of his son-in-law Yahiya Khan who, in case of the despatch of a force from Delhi might be put to death. The Wazir wrote several conciliatory letters to Shahnawaz Khan demanding the the liberation of Yahiya Khan, but he always replied that Yahiya's freedom from captivity depended on his own confirmation in the

[1]This fort is wrongly called by M'Gregor, on p. 131, Vol. I of his *History of the Sikhs* as 'Ram Rouree;' by Kanhiya Lal in his *Tarikh-e-Panjab* on p. 73 as 'Ram Ratni,' and by Sir Jadunath on p. 426 of Vol. I of his *Fall of the Mughal Empire* as 'Ram Roti.' Khushwaqt Rai, 83; Ratan Singh, 398-400; Gian Singh, 683-4;*Raj Khalsa*, 3; Prinsep, 9.

[2]Ashub, II, 451-2; Bakhtmal, 60; Khushwaqt Rai, 76; Sohan Lal, I, 114; Ahmad Shah, 837; Ali-ud-din, 106b.

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Viceroyalty of the Panjab under a royal rescript.[1] Shahnawaz Khan's hopes of reconciliation with his maternal uncle, the Delhi Wazir, were dashed to the ground with the escape of Yahiya Khan by the end of July. He made one more effort by sending his ambassador to the Emperor with the request that his misdeed should be forgiven and that he should be appointed deputy-Viceroy under the Wazir. The envoy reached Delhi on the 3rd September, 1747, but nothing came out of this mission. Shahnawaz Khan now felt sure that the retribution of the Emperor and his Wazir must fall upon him. Consequently he turned his mind in all directions to secure support. At this juncture the political horizon of India was suddenly overcast with clouds, and once more was the kaleidoscope to re-arrange its disc and glasses.

Confusion caused by the first Durrani campaign, December, 1747—March, 1748

Nadir Shah was murdered on the 9th June,[2] 1747 and his ablest general Ahmad Shah Abdali, also known by the title of the Durrani,[3] rose to power and founded an independent dynasty in Afghanistan. Having driven away Nasir Khan, the son of the old Mughal Governor of Kabul, retained in his office by Nadir Shah, he pursued the retreating Governor as far as Peshawar, and with this place as a suitable base, 'the man-power of Afghanistan' behind him and no hindrance in front, the loot of India, the Eldorado of the western people, became his ruling passion.

Shahnawaz Khan, as we have stated above, was in search of a strong ally in order to secure his position in Lahore. He hailed the presence of Ahmad Shah Durrani in Peshawar and appealed to him for help against the Emperor of Delhi in fear of the consequences of his act. Ahmad Shah, encouraged by the unexpected success of his first efforts, at once accepted his invitation in view of the utter weakness of the Delhi Empire which he had himself seen when in

[1]Ashub, II, 452; *Bayan*, 161; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 55a.

[2]Even after his invasion, Nadir Shah maintained his contact with the Delhi Court. He sent 81 horses with a letter to Muhammad Shah and 9 horses for each of his two ministers. They reached Delhi on 2nd May, 1746. Muhammad Shah sent 51 elephants as return presents to Nadir Shah. They reached Lahore on 1st July, 1746. Anandram, 168, 170.

[3]For details about the origin of the titles of Abdali and Durrani, *see* R. C. Temple's note in *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XII, September, 1883, p. 259 and *JASB*, Vol. XLIX, p. 95.

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attendance upon Nadir Shah. He left Peshawar by the middle of December, 1747, and arrived at Shahdara, 6 kms west of Lahore, on the 8th January, 1748. Meanwhile a change had taken place in the attitude of Shahnawaz Khan. The Delhi Wazir availing himself of his relationship wrote to his nephew conciliatory and flattering letters and appealed to his sense of honour and patriotism. This touched the young Governor's heart, and he prepared to oppose the invader whom a little while before he had invited.[1]

Ahmad Shah tried his best to bring Shahnawaz Khan back to his allegiance, but failed.[2] He crossed the Ravi on the 10th January and took up his position at the Shalimar Garden. An engagement between the Afghans and the Mughals took place on the 11th January in which Shahnawaz Khan was defeated and he fled to Delhi in the course of the same night.

The Abdali plundered the outer portions of the capital particularly Mohalla Mughalpura, the richest part of the town, but spared the city for a ransom of 30 lakhs. The whole baggage of Shahnawaz Khan, consisting of camp equipage, artillery, elephants, camels and horses, fell into the conqueror's hands and considerably augmented his military resources. The Abdali stayed in Lahore for over a month to make necessary arrangements for his march on Delhi, and leaving Jumla Khan[3] of Kasur as his Governor in Lahore he left it on the 19th February.

The flight of Shahnawaz Khan to Delhi had stirred the indolent Emperor, his Wazir and the court into activity. A huge army of 2 lakhs under Wazir Qamar-ud-din Khan was despatched to check the progress of the Afghans. The imperialists arrived near Sarhind on the 25th February, and to their utter amazement found that Ali Muhammad, the governor of the place, had deserted his post to avoid fighting with his Afghan brother and fled to Aonla in the Bareilly district. They decided to make Sarhind the base of their operations and before proceeding further they left their heavy baggage, surplus stores of arms and ammunition and their women including the

[1]The author of *Siyar* accuses Adina Beg of having persuaded Shahnawaz Khan to invite the Abdali and at the same time communicating the fact to the court of Delhi. Cf. Siyar, III, 9, 16-17.

[2]Ahmad Shah had sent Harun Khan and Sabir Shah as his envoys to Shahnawaz Khan one after the other; but the former was dismissed in disgrace and the latter was executed. *Bayan*, 163-4; *Siyar*, III, 17; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 74a; *Husain Shahi*, 20; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 6.

[3]Zilla Khan of Elliot, VIII, 106 and Jali Khan of Sohan Lal, I, 123.

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Wazir's harem in the small fort of Sarhind with a garrison of 1,000 horse and foot.

The imperialists committed a fatal blunder in deciding to cross the Satluj, not by the direct route at Ludhiana, but at Machhiwara, 30 kms north-east. A still greater folly was displayed in not maintaining their communications with Sarhind, in not posting a guard at the Ludhiana ford and in not collecting intelligence about the enemy's movements. The enemy on the other hand was extremely agile and vigorous and maintained absolute secrecy about their movements and whereabouts. The Abdali reached the Satluj opposite Ludhiana on the 1st March, 1748, forded the river unopposed, covered the distance of 65 kms in the night, and at dawn on the 2nd March took the fort of Sarhind. He put the garrison to the sword, seized all the stores of war materials and reduced the women to slavery.[1]

Great was the loss of the imperialists and still greater their dismay when they heard about the capture of Sarhind. They returned from Machhiwara to Manupur (15 kms north-west of Sarhind) where they sighted the roving bands of the Afghans and took up an entrenched position. The Abdali kept Sarhind as his base and entrenched his camp 8 kms north-west of Sarhind. Frequent skirmishes took place in the beginning. Alha Singh of Patiala gave great help to the government of Delhi by cutting off Abdali's supplies. His foraging parties were attacked, men were killed, and camels and horses were captured. On the morning of the 11th March when the Wazir was about to lead the imperial army for a general attack, he was mortally wounded by a cannon shot. Calling his son Muin-ul-Mulk he said, "My son! I am done for; it is all over with me. But the Emperor's work is not yet finished. Before this news spreads, quickly take horse and deliver the assault. After that you may look after me."[2]

The Wazir then expired. Muin repressed his filial feelings, rode on his father's elephant with his banners and led the attack. In the centre was Prince Ahmad Shah with Muin in front, on the right wing was Safdar Jang, and Ishwari Singh on the left. The Durrani

[1] "Abdali had ordered his troops to slay every Indian whom they might find in their camp or in the plains, so that not a single spy of the Wazir or of any other noble who went out to scout returned alive." (*Mujmil*, 101; Cf. Sarkar, I, 218.) Abdullah Khan and Faizullah Khan, the sons of Ali Muhammad Rohilla, kept as hostages by the Wazir in the fort, were also taken by the Abdali in his train and were released in October, 1751 (*Gulistan-e-Rahmat*, 25 and 45-6).

[2] Anandram, 347.

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resorted to strange tactics. 1,000 horse suddenly appeared before each wing, delivered a sharp volley and gradually fell back retiring to the rear, making room for fresh contingents to advance. In this way fresh and vigorous men came to the front every time. Under these new tactics the left wing gave way and the Rajputs were indiscriminately massacred. The thickest contest raged in the centre. Muin's skin was grazed, his brother was shot in the foot, Adina Beg was twice wounded and many officers of note were slain. The right wing heroically fought and drove away the Afghans. Safdar Jang then came to the rescue of Muin. Just at this time the Durrani store of rockets and gunpowder caught fire and killed 1,000 Afghans on the spot. The Durranis thus caught between the jaws of a nutcracker fled from the field, and the Panjab was recovered for the Mughal Empire.

The imperialists did not take advantage of this victory by immediately following up the enemy. It was only five days after the battle (16th March) that the Indians ventured to march out of their camp. Ahmad Shah Abdali had already left for home and so the imperialists enjoyed a holiday on the banks of the Satluj till the 12th April, when Prince Ahmad Shah left for Delhi and Muin-ul-Mulk for Lahore to take over charge of his new post as Governor of the Panjab.[1]

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Peaceful progress of the Sikhs

In the last chapter we left the Sikhs as having settled either in their homes or at Amritsar where they had commenced building the Ram Rauni fort. The Sikhs who had dispersed to their villages did the most useful work in peacefully propagating the tenets of Guru Gobind Singh. The simple peasants and other villagers had also seen with their own eyes how the Sikhs were augmenting their power even when they seemed to be beaten down to the dust. Whenever the Sikhs came back to their homes they became the centre of all affairs. The stories of their sufferings and heroic deeds were on everybody's lips. They were surrounded by the village youths

[1]Ahmad Shah, 859-63; Anandram, 34-77; *Mujmil*, 101-12: Bayan. 164-7; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 97-8 (all contemporary). Cf. *Zafar Namah*, 4b-12a; *Siyar*, III, 18-9; *Husain Shahi*, 27-30; *Muzaffari*, 74 a-b; Shiv Prashad, 14b-15a; *Imad*, 59a-62a; *Chahar Gulzar-e-Shujai*, 426b-27a; *Chahar Gulshan*, 16a; *Chahar Chaman*, 165b-66a; *Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 148; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 56b-57b; *Mustqim*, 298a; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 7-8; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 126; Ali-ud-din, 108a-109b; Sarkar, I,

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who listened to their adventurous deeds with zeal and rapt attention. They joined them in playing games, in wrestling matches and in hunting expeditions. The poor men and women thronged at their doors begging alms. The suffering persons sought redress at their hands, because the Sikhs had established it as the foremost principle of their religion to help the poor and the needy and to redress the grievances of the oppressed. Besides, this was the gang age. An individual might do very little of his own, but as a member of a gang would do and dare a great deal. This factor had an important influence upon the development of personality which grew under the shelter and comradeship of the group These were the causes which were paving the way for the Sikh religion to make it a mass movement among the peasantry of the central Panjab. When the Sikhs returned from their homes either to Amritsar or to some other rendezvous they were followed by a number of village young men to be baptized to Sikhism and recruited to the Khalsa ranks. This is borne out by the fact, as we shall study later on, that the band of a Sikh leader consisted mostly of the young men of his own village or neighbouring villages, and the villages of his relations and friends.

Thus, this period of seven months (May-November) was most usefully spent. The Sikhs of Amritsar leisurely finished the Ram Rauni fort, adorned and magnified their temple and tank, and constructed *katras* (residential quarters) in its immediate neighbourhood.

Early in November strong rumours of the impending Durrani invasion spread all over the country. The Sikhs rose up in arms once more. They sent their women and children to the hills of Jammu, Chamba, Kangra and Hoshiarpur as the other inhabitants were doing, and then gathered at Amritsar pretending to protect their holy places from desecration. On the commencement of hostilities between Ahmad Shah Durrani and his namesake the Delhi Prince, the Majha Sikhs decided not to co-operate either with the Mughals or with the Afghans because their struggle lay against both.[1] The Sikhs seem to have retired to the northern parts of the Bari Doab where their depredations remained for the time unchecked. Thus they busied themselves in settling old scores with their

[1]Abdali might have opened communications with them because he was short of men and badly needed fresh troops on whom he could lay his hands in India; but we do not come across any reference to it.

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enemies and in acquiring immense booty, and "made themselves masters of a considerable part of the Doab of Ravi and Jullundur, and extended their incursions to the neighbouring countries."[1]

Sikhs fall upon the retreating Afghans, c. 18th-26th March, 1748

Ahmad Shah Abdali was defeated by the Imperialists on the 11th March. He crossed the Satluj at Ludhiana on the 17th March and retired towards Lahore in a hurry in order to avoid any pursuit. He took his goods and property from Lahore in all possible haste and by rapid marches travelled to Afghanistan.

The Sikhs had known all about it and resolved not to let the vanquished general pass through the Panjab unmolested. They fell upon his rear-guard at many places till he reached the Chenab acquiring good booty in the shape of baggage, arms, camels and horses.[2]

The Dal Khalsa established, 29th March, 1748

We have seen in the previous pages that in 1745 the Sikhs had formed themselves into small bands, in which they welcomed all the fresh recruits and supplied them with arms and horses. The leaders, being guided by their personal ambition, had been so far content with small scale operations. They had no occasion to unite their forces, except in the small Ghallughara, where also they had not fought under the command of one supreme leader.

Even in the absence of the unity of command, the enthusiasm and endurance of the Sikh soldiers were great. With the training of half a century they had become born warriors who despised death, believed in war as the honourable profession for man and regarded hand to hand fight much in the same way as an Englishman regards football or racing. The Sikhs were sober and strong, and their scorn of danger was only equalled by their unlimited pride in themselves and their inborn hatred of the Musalmans. Guerilla warfare, ambushes, sniping and decoys were their favourite tactics and they preferred death to surrender or captivity.

Their small scale organization had shown its obvious advantages.

[1]Cf. Gian Singh, 684; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 85; Malcolm, 91.

[2]Sohan Lal, I, 172: Ahmad Shah, 862; Griffin's *Rajas*, 457. (Bakhtmal, 65 says that the Sikhs kept up the pursuit to the Indus. This view seems rather inflated. At this stage of their power they could not venture to thrust themselves in the midst of a hostile population. Moreover they had to attend the Baisakhi festival which was fast approaching).

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They had learnt to exercise foresight, to submit to command and to conceive of large purposes. The leader who had felt the joy of command was rewarded by the implicit obedience, unflinching faith, constant attention of his followers, and by a larger share of the spoil. The men whom he had led to victory were devotedly attached to him. They had one common grievance against the oppressors of their faith, and one common bond of union, their faith. The leader, enriched by the booty, was in a position to strengthen more securely the tie between him and his followers, by occasional gifts and presents, and a further continued succession of fortunate expeditions and conquests resulted in binding them permanently.

In the progressive state of the Khalsa another development was bound to take place in course of time. It was uniting the whole body of the fighting Sikhs in the form of a standing national army. Its idea had been supplied to them in a concrete form by Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bahadur. Experience in contending with their enemies had taught them the need of some measure of union. The odds were so heavily against them that uniting and acting in one body and on one principle was with them a law of necessity. Being surrounded with danger their only hope of success lay in unity, as this was the sole means of their preservation.

It was due to these causes that some of the far-seeing talented Sikh leaders realized the need of widening the circle of the attachment existing between the soldiers and the sardars in each group, and this could be effected only by uniting them under one supreme command, thus binding each individual not only with his colleagues and the chief but also with the whole *Panth*. It was also felt that the independent position of as many as 65 chiefs,* whose number was rapidly increasing, would not lead to any solidarity in making them a power without taking such a step. On the other hand there was the danger that the feelings of jealousy and selfishness might arise among them if they were allowed to follow their own line of action.

Luckily for the Sikhs, a very capable leader who commanded high respect from all the Sikhs and who possessed remarkable powers of organisation had appeared among them. This was Jassa

*The following names are reproduced from Ali-ud-din, folio 110 a-b. Some of them have been traced in Griffin as is mentioned below. Cf. Sohan Lal, 127-8.

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Singh Ahluwalia,[1] who had received his training under the famous leader Nawab Kapur Singh. The Nawab was the most venerable Sikh leader. Owing to the constant help and guidance of the Nawab and his own sterling virtues, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had come to occupy a very prominent position among the Sikh leaders. The Nawab was growing old and he wanted to give the leadership of the warlike Khalsa to somebody else. He had his eye on the promising Jassa Singh and he was on the look-out for an opportunity to do so.

1. Hari Singh Bhangi of Panjwar, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 385) 2. Jhanda Singh of Panjwar, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 386). 3. Ganda Singh of Panjwar (*Punjab Chiefs*, 386) 4. Natha Singh, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 365). 5. Gulab Singh 6. Charat Singh, (Charat Singh Kanhiya, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 339). 7. Diwan Singh. 8. Gujar Singh. 9. Garja Singh and 10. Nibahu Singh, sons of Natha and Lalan of village Bhurisal. (Sarja Singh, a follower of Charat Singh Sukarchakia, died in 1763 (*Punjab Chiefs*, 308). 11. Lahna Singh of Mustafabad near Kartarpur, 12. Phula Singh Roranwala. 13. Sanwal Singh Randhawa of village Bagha, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 207). 14. Gurbakhsh Singh of Doda, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 212). 15. Dunba Singh of Kalalwala. (Dhanna Singh, *Punjab Chiefs*, 151). 16. Tara Singh of Chainpur. (Tara Singh of Mananwala settled at Narli in Amritsar, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 177). 17. Bagh Singh of village Sayyid Mahmud. 18. Haqiqat Singh and 19. Mahtab Singh, sons of Chaudhari Baghela, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 321). 20. Jai Singh of Kanha, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 315). 21. Jhanda Singh of Kanha, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 315). 22. Tara Singh and 23. Manohar Singh, sons of Harso of village Kanha. 24. Sobha Singh and 25. Bhim Singh, nephews of Jai Singh Kanhiya. 26. Amar Singh Bagga, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 83 & 305) 27. Sobha Singh of Bhika. 28. Nawab Kapur Singh, son of Nathu of Faizulljahpur, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 321, *Rajas of the Punjab*, 461). 29. Baghel of Jhabal or Chaubal, 30. Gulab Singh Dallewalia. 31. Hari Singh Dallewalia. 32. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. 33. Nodh Singh Sukarchakia, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 11). 34. Gulab Singh, father-in-law of Nodh Singh. 35. Mahtab Singh. 36. Karora Singh. 37. Haro Singh. 38. Lajja Singh, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 171). 39. Nand Singh Sanghania, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 543). 40. Kapur Singh Sorianwala. 41. Amar Singh Kingra. 42. Sahib Singh and 43. Jiwan Singh of Qila Jiwan Singh. Sahib Singh Sialkotia, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 386). 44. Dip Singh and 45. Natha Singh Shahid, (Massy 218-9). 46. Mohar Singh Ranianwala. 47. Mahan Singh Ranianwala. 48. Bagh, Singh of Lankafraukia. 49. Jhanda Singh Sultanona. 50. Mirza Singh Kahlon, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 230). 51. Sham Singh Man of Bulaqi Chak. 52. Mala Singh of Bulaqi Chak, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 452). 53. Bahal Singh of Shaikhupura. 54. Amir Singh of Shaikhupura. 55. Hira Singh, (*Punjab Chiefs*, 119). 56. Ganga Singh. 57. Lal Singh. 58. Amar Singh. 59. Mahtab Singh. 60. Rup Singh. 61. Anup Singh Nakai. 62. Dasaundha Singh, (In Adina's service, 1730-58, *Punjab Chiefs*, 217). 63. Tara Singh Ghaiba (Massy 323). 64. Dharam Singh Khatri of Amritsar. 65. Sukha Singh of Mari Kambo. (Massy, I, 192).

[1]Jassa Singh was the son of Dyal Singh, a Kalal (distiller of wine) of village Ahlu near Lahore, and was therefore called Ahluwalia. He was born in 1718 A.D.

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Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

[*facing p. 90*

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This opportunity came handy on the retirement of Ahmad Shah Abdali from the province. On the sacred day of Baisakhi, 29th March, 1748, the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar. It was on this occasion that Nawab Kapur Singh impressed upon the assemblage the need for solidarity of the *Panth*, and placed Jassa Singh in the supreme command of all the Sikh forces. The entire fighting body of the Sikhs was given the name of 'Dal Khalsa.' There were eleven leaders of most prominent ability among the various Sikh chiefs. Hence the 65 groups were leagued together in eleven main divisions, each with a distinguishing title and banner, but varying in strength:

1. The *Ahluwalia Misl* under the leadership of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who, in addition to it, held the chief command of the 'Dal Khalsa' at the time of any expedition or battle.
2. The *Bhangi Misl* under Hari Singh Bhangi.[1]
3. The *Dallewalia Misl* under Gulab Singh of village Dallewal near Derah Baba Nanak on the Ravi.
4. The *Faizullahpuria or Singhpuria Misl* under the renowned Nawab Kapur Singh of village Faizullahpur.
5. The *Kanhiya Misl* under Jai Singh Kanhiya of village Kanha in Lahore District.
6. The *Karorasinghia Misl* under Karora Singh of Panjgarh[2].
7. The *Nakai Misl* under Hira Singh Nakai of village Baharwal in Chunian Tahsil of Lahore District[3].
8. The *Nishanwala Misl* under Dasaundha Singh, the standard-bearer of the Dal Khalsa.

Nawab Kapur Singh took a fancy to him when he was a boy of 15, administered him *Pahul* and appointed him to feed the Sikh horses with grain. In manhood he became a youth of tall stature and wonderful physique, so much so that his breakfast consisted of one kilogram of butter and a good quantity of sugar, while he could devour the meat of half a goat at one meal. (Ratan Singh, 265-6; Gian Singh, 571; *Raj Khalsa*, 370).

[1]Bhuma Singh, who was very much addicted to taking 'bhang' (hemp), was the leader of the band, and as he was given the title of 'Bhangi' on account of this habit, his band also came to be called the Bhangi Misl. Hari Singh had succeeded him on his death.

[2]Karam Singh, *Phulwari*, May, 1928, p. 573, and *Punjab Chiefs*, 170; Bakhtmal, 66; Khushwaqt Rai, 103; Sohan Lal, I, 110; Browne, II, 16 (who gives Chirsah Singh for Charat Singh, Tokah Singh for Sukha Singh, and Kirwar Singh for Karora Singh, as the confederates of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia); Sarup Lal's *Tarikh-e-Sikhan*, 2; *Tarikh-e-Patiala*, 52.

[3]Hira Singh was called Nakai because he belonged to the tract called Nakka or border, situated to the south of Lahore.

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9. Unit of Nand Singh Sanghaniya, afterwards known as the *Ramgarhia Misl*
10. Dip Singh's band which came to be called afterwards the *Shahidi Misl* on account of its leader's martyrdom while fighting against the Afghans, as we shall see later on.
11. The *Sukarchakia Misl* under Nodh Singh of village Sukarchak in Gujranwala District.[1]

Constitution of the Dal Khalsa

It seems idle to give the name of a constitution to the crude system of an overwhelming state of alliance and dependence established by the Sikhs on this occasion. We should not expect any elaborate plan worked out by the simple illiterate tillers of the soil, as we are accustomed to find it in the enactments of legislative bodies or in the regulations of religious preceptors. The existence of such a scheme, as was adopted by the Sikhs on this occasion, may be better traced in the dictates of common human nature. The system was not devised or purposely adopted and therefore it was rather temporary and incomplete. Every Sikh who believed in the tenents of Guru Gobind Singh, was considered a member of the Dal Khalsa without any need being felt to secure his willingness. It was thought compulsory for each individual to enroll himself in the Khalsa army in order to wage war against the enemies of his faith and his persecutors and therefore each Sikh who was true to his faith, was supposed to have become a member of Dal Khalsa. But nobody was admitted a member of any misl which constituted the Dal Khalsa, unless he was an active horseman and proficient in the use of arms. Every individual, even of the meanest birth, had the right of choosing the leader he would like to serve.

The joint forces of all the misls took the field either upon any predatory enterprise or to offer a bold front to the enemy. On these occasions the army assumed the denomination of the Dal Khalsa. The chiefs had agreed by common consent that at such times someone from among themselves should be appointed from time to time to be the head of the Dal to guide them in all matters requiring united action, while the other ten chiefs were to constitute an ad-

[1]This Nodh Singh was the great-grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Soon afterwards he met with death in a cave where he had taken shelter against the Mughal soldiers, who, failling to drive him out, set fire to the cave. He was succeeded by Charat Singh, then only 14 years old. (Ali-ud-din, 203 b).

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visory body or council of war.

Their unity was further maintained by the gatherings of the whole body of the Sikhs called the 'Sarbat Khalsa' twice a year at Amritsar on the occasions of the Baisakhi and Diwali festivals, which generally fall in April and October respectively. At these times the Sikh chiefs held a special council under the presidentship of the chief leader and passed resolutions (*Gurmatas*) on matters of more than ordinary interest to the *panth*. The Akalis, or men wholly and solely devoted to war and worship, formed the central league of the Sikh religion. They had the sole direction of all religious affairs at Amritsar. All the cases of irregularity were referred to them and thus they played the part of the defenders of the faith. They were stern zealots who maintained the purity of the Sikh doctrines, watched over the general conduct of the Sikhs by exercising a fierce scrutiny as censors and took a prominent part in conducting the National Councils. They initiated converts, imposed fines upon those who broke the laws of the community, and in the event of disobedience prevented them from performing worship or going through any religious ceremony at the Hari Mandar, Amritsar.

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Thus a kind of federal union was established and the leader of the Dal Khalsa was looked upon as the head of the Church and State. Whenever there was no emergency, each misl acted independently, or in concert, as necessity or inclination suggested. Each sardar of a misl was to lead his followers in warlike activities and act as an arbiter in times of peace. The sardar did not exercise absolute authority over his comrades. They paid him due regard and treated him with respect; but they were under no obligation to obey him beyond what was required in the interests of the whole *panth*, or of their misl or their own mutual advantage. The chiefs, therefore, were forced on all occasions, to be very careful in looking to the wants and wishes of their followers, and in treating them with attention and conciliation. It was only in this way that they could retain them in their service; otherwise a little indifference on their part was sufficient to cause their desertion and going over to another chief, who was ever ready to accord them a warm welcome. This was the reason that even the humblest Sikh in the Dal Khalsa was happy because he was free from all kinds of tyranny and violence from his chiefs and therefore even the lowest Sikh horseman usually assumed an independent attitude of mind.

Thus this system of voluntary service secured not only good

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treatment from the chiefs but also a share in the booty or land. All the booty taken was divided proportionately among the chiefs, according to the number of their followers, and they in turn sub-divided it among their men. This was the remuneration for their services in the absence of any fixed salary.

Distant relations and friends of the Sardar of the misl formed a link between the highest and the lowest Sikhs. There existed no wide distinction between them. All possessed the same descent to boast of and the same exclusive profession of arms. Moreover, there was the strong bond of brotherhood according to the commands of the last Guru and as found in the bond of *pahul*. They also fought in the same cause and suffered from the same grievances. Thus they developed a similar type of mind and character.

The Sikh chiefs who were at the head of the various misls forming the Dal Khalsa were really great soldiers and men of insight. They possessed a mind that planned broadly, grasped tenaciously and saw clearly. Every one of them was going to be the master-builder in consolidating the Sikh power. He needed tools on which he could absolutely rely. These were supplied to him by the soldiers under him. They all had ambition and therefore they obeyed him, followed him and helped him, and thus the sardar as well as the soldier, united in one common object, passed on from glory to glory.[1]

The principal point to be borne in mind is that the military system of the Sikhs was not established by the king or the chief. The Sikh sardars did not create and endow their following, but were created and endowed by them. They were, in fact, elected by their soldiers. It was only in later days that by aid of regular troops and military combination they acquired a larger hereditary power.

The foundation of the Dal Khalsa was a step of the greatest significance in the history of the Sikhs, because it united them once again in a compact body after a period of 33 years. It served the most useful purpose of giving the Sikhs an ideal of unity and power, in keeping them bound together by the common tie of faith in the teeth of the severest persecution, and in making them adis ciplined body. They had realized that obedience to their leader was a religi-

[1]Cf. Ahmad Shah, 966-68; Sohan Lal, Appendix to Vol. I, 14; James Browne, *India Tracts*, II, 16; Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, 122-23; Ratan Singh Bhangu, 162-70; Gian Singh; *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, III, 269; M' Gregor, I, 118-19; Cunningham, 111-18; Latif's *Panjab*, 290; Gordon, 73-8; *Raj Khalsa*, 381.

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ous duty, as a commandment of the Guru, imposed upon them by the *Panth*, in whose body the Guru had merged his personality; and every sacrifice made for the *Panth* was the real service of the Guru. This singleness of purpose and harmony made them the strongest military body of the day and prepared the way for their establishment as a political power.

The Dal Khalsa is called differently by various names and given diverse definitions. James Browne calls it 'Confederacy Khalsa Gee' or the 'Dull Khalsa Gee.'[1] Sir John Malcolm applies the term Dal Khalsa to the combined forces of Sikh sardars at a certain place and time.[2] Sohan Lal says that the conquering armies of the Sikhs formed Dal Khalsa Jio.[3] Ratan Singh Bhangu calls it 'The Dal of the Singhs.'[4] Cunningham says it was the 'army of theocracy of Singhs.'[5] Gian Singh names it *Khalsa da Dal* or Khalsa Dal.[6] Khalifa Muhammad Hasan writes:

'The Dal was an army of Sikh freebooters who moved about in the country for the sake of plunder.'[7] N. K. Sinha defines it as "the grand army' of the Khalsa confederacy.[8]

This is remarkable to note that the first organisation of the Khalsa under Guru Gobind Singh, numbering, about five thousand had broken up at the siege of Anandpur in 1704 after five years. The second organisation of the Khalsa under Banda Bahadur, about fourteen thousand, was destroyed at Gurdas Nangal in 1715 after six years. The third organisation in 1748 was destined to endure upto the end of the century when Ranjit Singh established monarchy on its ruins.

Meaning and origin of Misl

Misl is an Arabic word meaning alike, equal or similar. It is closely connected with Persian word Misāl implying example, simile, likeness, similitude or picture. In Sikh history the word was first

[1]Browne, *India Tracts*, II, 16.

[2]Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, 122-23.

[3]Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, 1885 edition, I, 127-28.

[4]Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, edited by Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1962, p. 441.

[5]Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, 1848 edition, 101.

[6]Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, Languages Department, Panjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 209.

[7]Muhammad Hasan, *Tarikh-e-Patiala*, Amritsar, 1878, p. 52.

[8]Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, 195.

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used by Guru Gobind Singh. He applied the word to a body of troops fighting under a leader of their own choice. Sainapat, an eminent scholar in the service of the Guru, uses the word Misl, while describing the battle of Bhangani, fought in 1688 in District Nahan of Himachal Pradesh between Guru Gobind Singh and the neighbouring hill rajas.

Sainapat was present in the battlefield. He says that at the call of Ranjit Nagārā or war-drum, the horsemen of Guru Gobind Singh immediately gathered under their banners. The chiefs rushed into the battlefield and set up their morchās or trenches at different places at the head of their misls. The word here implies a group or a unit of horsemen.[1]

Sainapat again uses this term when Guru Gobind Singh was staying at Nander on the Godavari in Maharashtra. About middle of September 1708 the Guru held a great durbar. There he conferred the title of Bahadur on Banda and he was invested with political and military authority. He was deputed to Panjab to punish Wazir Khan, Governor of Sarhind and establish Sikh sovereignty there. Sainapat says this durbar was attended by the Sikhs in misls.[2]

Sayyid Imam-ud-din Husaini, writing in 1798, says that a Sikh Misl was a *derah* or an encampment. (Yani' misl kudām sardar ast[3]). Sir David Ochterlony in 1809 described a Sikh misl as a 'tribe or race.'[4] Ratan Singh Bhangu who compiled his work, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, in the early thirties of the nineteenth century, interprets the term at several places in the sense of a thānā meaning a military or a police post. The head of a thānā is called thānewāl by him.[5]

Wilson considered it a voluntary association of the Sikhs.[6] Henry T. Prinsep observes that the misls "were confederacies of equals, under chiefs of their own selection."[7] W.L. M'Gregor calls

[1]Sainapat, *Sri Gur Sobha*, Gurmukhi, edited by Ganda Singh and published by Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, p. 9.

[2]ibid, 124.

[3]*Tarikh-e-Husain Shahi* (Persian MS), Sir Jadunath Sarkar copy, 65.

[4]Sir David Ochterlony to the Government of India, December 30, 1809, quoted by J.D Cunningham in his *Sikh History*, 1955 edition, p. 97 f.n. 1.

[5]Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash* 364. (Gurmukhi),

[6]Wilson, Civil and Religious Institutions of the Sikhs, *The Sikh Religion*, A Symposium, Calcutta, 1958, p. 61.

[7]Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Panjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Languages Department, Panjab, 1970, p. 23.

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a misls 'a friendly nation.'[1] H.M.L. Lawrence described the misls as 'brotherhoods.'[2] Major Henry Court states that a misl signified dependency to a chief or a petty ruler who was under the authority of a Raja. To J.D. Cunningham the term meant 'armed men and warlike people.'[3] Payne says: "As membership in such a *Jatha* or group conferred political, religious and social equality on all its members, they began to be designated as Misls."[4] Sir James Douie defined it as 'a political and military organization.'[5]

Syad Muhammad Latif explains it as follows: "The various clans under their respective chiefs were leagued together, and formed a confederacy, which they denominated misl or 'similitude,' thereby implying that the chief and the followers of one clan were equal to those of another."[6] George Batley Scott writes: 'The several states or confederacies were known as misls, a Persian word meaning alike (applied also to a court file of papers).'[7]

Sita Ram Kohli stated: 'A Derah was composed of several subordinate groups called Misals. This term seems to have come into use some time in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and denoted the small groups or bands of horsemen into which the more daring Sikhs had organised themselves during their period of exile.'[8] He adds: 'A Misal, therefore, like the company in a regiment, was a subordinate unit of a Derah.'[9]

Teja Singh declares the Sikh misls as 'powers of equal rank.'[10] N.K. Sinha writes: 'The Sikhs formed themselves into misls or confederacies.'[11] Muhammad Baqir of Lahore University stated that a misl was 'a sect of the Sikhs.'[12]

The latest Sikh historian and journalist, Khushwant Singh, considers misls as 'militias.'[13]

[1]M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, 1846, I, 118.

[2]Major H.M.L. Lawrence, *Adventures of an Officer in the Panjab*, original edition, I, 244.

[3]J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, 1955, p. 96 and f.n. 1.

[4]Payne, *History of the Panjab*, 1964, p. 290.

[5]Douie, *The Panjab, North-West Frontier Province and Kashmir*, 1916, 179.

[6]Latif, *History of the Panjab*, 1964, p. 290.

[7]Scott, *Religion and Short History of the Sikhs*, 1469 to 1930, p. 40.

[8]*Maharaja Ranjit Singh, First Death Centenary Memorial*, Languages Department, Panjab, 1970, p. 82. [9]ibid, 83. [10]ibid, 11.

[11]Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, 1960, p. 57.

[12]Muhammad Baqir, in his book *Lahore, Past and Present*, VIII, 1952.

[13]Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 52.

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CHAPTER 5

The Sikhs and Muin-ul-Mulk, April, 1748—November, 1753

Muin-ul-Mulk takes charge of the Government of the Panjab, April, 1748

The organization of the Sikhs into a strong military unit proved its sterling worth immediately after its inception. Their new constitution had supplied the Sikhs with the necessary material in anticipation of their need before the difficulties arose. The Sikhs had expected that the demoralised Court of Delhi would appoint a weakling like Yahiya Khan or Shahnawaz Khan to the governorship of Lahore and they in their organised form would carry everything in their way. Their hopes were therefore high and their enthusiasm exalted when they found themselves once more united into a power as they had been in the past under Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bahadur.

In this expectation they were to be sorely disappointed. The dying Emperor Muhammad Shah had displayed genuine statesmanship in appointing the hero of the battle of Manupur and the vanquisher of the Afghan invader to the government of the most turbulent frontier province. Muin-ul-Mulk, popularly known as Mir Mannu, the son of late Wazir Qamar-ud-din Khan, on account of his great valour, strict discipline and wise diplomacy, was thought to be the best choice in order to inspire awe in the mind of the future invaders from the north-west as well as among the refractory peasantry of the Panjab.

He took charge of his new government by the middle of April, appointed Kaura Mal his Diwan, and confirmed Adina Beg Khan in the *faujdari* of the Jullundur Doab.[1]

[1]*Khazana-e-Amira,* 98; Khushwaqt Rai, 79; Ahmad Shah, 863-4; Shah Yusaf, 55b.

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Muin's difficulties in his new government

Muin did not find his government a bed of roses. The civil war between Yahiya Khan and Shahnawaz Khan, the sons of the late Viceroy Zakariya Khan, had denuded the treasury of its riches and had also dislocated the finances of the country. The invasion of the Durrani which had followed close on the heels of the civil war had further aggravated the political misery. The Sikhs and other lawless people had found favourable opportunities in these upheavals and had extended their depredations on a large scale. The constant fear of the renewal of the Afghan invasion added to Muin's difficulties. Besides the troubles in his own government Muin-ul-Mulk was unfortunately called upon to provide against the machinations of Safdar Jang (the new Delhi Wazir), who was bent upon bringing ruin to the Turani party and who found in Muin a future rival to his own position at the Court of Delhi, as the latter, besides his personal ability, had claims for the wazirship through his late father and grandfather both of whom had held the office of the prime minister.

To equip himself against these difficulties Muin seems to have thought of one remedy, namely to possess a well-organized army. Accordingly, he raised troops, mostly Turks of Central Asia, belonging to his own race, who were roaming about in search of jobs after the disruption of Nadir's army (June, 1747) and on whom he could best rely.[1]

Punitive expeditions against the Sikhs, c. May-June, 1748

Amongst the factors disturbing the peace of the province, the Sikhs were the most troublesome. They naturally required the first attention of the new Governor. Accordingly, when Muin set himself to the task of restoring peace in the country, he started despatching punitive expeditions in pursuit of the Sikhs. The laurels which he had won at the battle of Manupur had already inspired awe in the minds of the Sikhs, and therefore they retreated before his contingents. They evacuated the Bari Doab and entered the

[1]Two Turki Jamadars, Sabat-ud-din Beg and Muhammad Nazir Beg came from Multan to Lahore at this time to seek service under Muin, and presented him three Turki boys each aged eight or nine years. (Miskin, 47-8). One of them named Tahmas Miskin, who rose to be a Delhi peer, dictated in 1782 an absolutely original and most valuable account of the Panjab events for the following fourteen years. (British Museum Persian MS. 8807, Sarkar copy cited.)

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Jullundur Doab, where they received friendly gestures from Adina Beg. But Muin was a different man from some of the previous Governors whom Adina Beg had been able to hoodwink. Muin issued strict instructions to Adina to curb the Sikhs, and Adina Beg though reluctant led an expedition against them. In the engagement that followed both the parties lost heavily, the Sikhs alone leaving 600 dead on the field of battle. Adina Beg Khan, in view of the superior numbers of the Sikhs, gave up the pursuit and applied to Muin for reinforcements.[1]

Siege of Ram Rauni Fort, c. October, 1748—February, 1749

In the meantime the rains had set in and all further operations were suspended for about three months (July-September). The Sikhs also did not disturb the Government and confined their activities only to the submontane region in the north of the Bari and Jullundur Doabs. It was an article of faith with them, as we have had occasion to observe before, that they must celebrate the Baisakhi and Diwali festivals at Hari Mandir. Consequently, in the month of October, on the occasion of the Diwali, the Sikhs once again took the risk of assembling at Amritsar. They bathed in the tank, said their prayers at the temple, illuminated the whole place and made offerings to the Holy Granth. All this they did, but they were not indifferent to the impending danger from the Government of Muin-ul-Mulk. Accordingly they proceeded to make provision against it. Five hundreds of them took shelter within the fort of Ram Rauni, while the rest hid themselves in the neighbouring jungle with a view to rendering help to the garrison in an emergency.

Khushwaqt Rai, the author of *Kitab-e-Tarikh-e-Panjab*, on folios 83-4 continues the story in the following words: "Nawab Mir Mannu, on hearing of this news, marched with troops to chastise them. Under his orders, Adina Beg Khan also joined him. Having arrived at Amritsar they laid siege to the fort of Ram Rauni which is now known as Ramgarh. The siege continued for four months and daily skirmishes took place.[2] During this period two hundred Sikhs out of the garrison were killed. The rest wrote to Jassa Singh Thoka (carpenter) who was in the service of Adina Beg Khan, that

[1]Sohan Lal, I, 127-8; Browne, II, 16; Bakhtmal, 67.

[2]Ratan Singh (401) says that Muin's troops were very much harassed by the night attacks of the Sikhs who came in large numbers to succour their brethren in the fort.

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he, being on the side of the Muslims, was the cause of their ruin, and if he did not come that day to their help he would never be allowed to be re-admitted into the Panth. Jassa Singh, on considerations of his co-religionists, deserting Adina Beg Khan entered the fort in the night.[1] It strengthened the perseverance of the besieged. At this time Kaura Mal who was a believer in the religion of Nanak Shah, was the Diwan. Jassa Singh sent a message to the Diwan. 'The garrison can secure relief only through your efforts. If you try, three hundred lives can be saved.' Kaura Mal made a request to the Nawab, saying, 'The Sikhs always cause confusion and disorder. It will be advisable, if you settle something as subsistence for these people. They will not create disturbances afterwards, and I will be responsible for it.' Adina Beg Khan, however, dissented. Muin said, 'Whatever Kaura Mal does, is always to the advantage of the Government.' Adina Beg Khan remarked, 'Goodness to the evil-doers is doing evil to the good people.' The Nawab replied, 'It is better to stitch the mouth of a dog with morsels.' He approved of Kaura Mal's suggestion, granted them one-fourth of the revenue of the *parganah* of Patti and came back to Lahore. Kaura Mal took a number of Sikhs into his pay and showed them all indulgence. Being a believer of the Guru he paid the Sikhs a fine of Rs. 5 per day for smoking.[2]

Sikhs settle down to a peaceful life, c. February-December, 1749

The conciliatory policy of Diwan Kaura Mal brought in a short period of respite in the history of the Sikhs. Many of them accepted service under the Diwan, while others took to peaceful life at home. The patronage of the Diwan further reacted upon the attitude of the local officials both Hindus and Muslims, and the Sikh peasantry in the villages were no longer harassed by them. During this period of peace, which extended nearly over a year, the Sikh ranks were further strengthened, since the non-Sikh peasantry and

[1]Jassa Singh had been excommunicated from the Khalsa brotherhood for killing his daughter (Ratan Singh, 402; Gian Singh, 687), and probably for deserting them when deputed to Adina Beg Khan. Jassa Singh headed a contingent of 100 Sikhs and 60 Hindus on this occasion. ibid.

[2]Khushwaqt Rai, 83-4. Cf. Ratan Singh, 400-4; Gian Singh, 684-7. "It is supposed," says Forster, I, 314, "that their force would then have been annihilated, had not these people found a strenuous advocate, in his minister Korah Mal who was himself of the Khulasah sect and diverted Meer Munnoo from reaping the full fruits of the superiority he had gained." Cf. Malcolm, 91-2.

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the village menials also began to join their fold in the hope of receiving the favoured treatment meted out to them. This was also made possible by the fact that the commonwealth of Guru Gobind Singh recognized no caste restrictions amongst the members of the church.

Muin-ul-Mulk's precautionary measures

Though the Sikhs had become quiet, yet the government of Muin-ul-Mulk, on its part, did not neglect to provide against the danger from the Sikhs. The use of artillery was considered to be very effective in the desultory warfare against the Sikhs. This branch of the army service was now strengthened and re-organized. A new type of light guns known as *jizairs* (long firelocks) was manufactured by the State and a troop of 900 such gunners was soon added to the army at Lahore.[1]

Sikhs plunder Lahore during the second Durrani invasion, December, 1749—February, 1750

The peace between the Government and the Sikhs did not last long as there had been no change of heart on either side. Muin knew that the Sikhs who had been a constant thorn in the side of the Lahore Government were not going to settle down so easily; while on the other hand the Sikhs were looking with suspicion at the war preparations of the Viceroy in manufacturing *jizairs* and training a corps of *jizairchis* under his own personal supervision. Both the parties, were nursing a grudge in their hearts. It also seems possible that the Sikhs were feeling tired of their inactive life at Amritsar. Most of their leaders were realizing that living on the dole of the Government for the destruction of which they had been organized by Guru Gobind Singh, was a matter of great shame to them. They were also thinking that they were not taking advantage of their recent organization and on the contrary were losing the gains which they had won during their past struggle of half a century. They were looking out for an opportunity for becoming their old selves again, and it was soon afforded to them by the fresh invasion of Ahmad Shah. The Durrani crossed the Indus by the middle

[1]Cf. Miskin, 67-8. The author further tells us that the Governor Muin-ul-Mulk took a keen interest in watching the exercises and manoeuvres of these new troops and bestowed as prizes silver bangles and other gifts on the *jizairchis* with his own hands.

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of December, 1749 and ravaging the country on the way halted at Kopra on the right bank of the Chenab. Muin-ul-Mulk quickly moved from Lahore and encamped at Sodhara, 7 kms east of Wazirabad on the left bank of the river.

Abdali addressed a letter to Muin demanding to be assigned the revenues of the 'chahar mahal' for the future, and to be paid the arrears since the time of Nadir Shah's death. Muin, apprehensive of the weakness of his military resources forwarded the letter to the Emperor at Delhi begging reinforcements and thus prolonged negotiations evidently to gain time. But great was his surprise when he learnt that the Emperor had granted the invader the revenues for the *chahar mahal*.

Muin was conscious of the limitations of his military resources. He yielded to the demand of the Durrani by ceding to him the revenues of Aurangabad, Gujrat, Sialkot, and Pasrur valued at 14 lakhs of rupees a year. Ahmad Shah Abdali, who had led this expedition only with a view to forming an idea of the military strength of the hero of Manupur, abstained from attempting to force his way into the country and retired to Kandahar.[1]

The invasion of the Durrani and the occupation of the forces of the Lahore viceroy against the invader were a signal for the Sikhs to start on their business. In large numbers they gathered at Amritsar and decided to attack Lahore by way of washing off their sin of having accepted a favour at the hands of the Mughals. They fell on the capital in a huge body and plundered and burnt the outer portions of the city to ashes. Nawab Kapur Singh then entered the town and took his seat on the platform of the Kotwali, apparently to get a portion of the revenues of the city. Izzat Khan, the acting Deputy of Muin, came with his troops to fight, whereupon Kapur Singh left the place and retired out of the city.[2]

Renewal of Sikh persecution, c. March-June, 1750

When Muin came back to Lahore he was very much enraged to see the suburbs of his beautiful capital pillaged and ruined by the

[1]*Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 46-8: Miskin, 53: *Bayan*, 175-6; *Zafar Namah*, 20a *Khazana-e-Amira*, 98; (all contemporary). Cf. *Maasir-ul-Umara*, I, 360; *Siyar*, III, 29-30; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 80a; *Tarikh-e Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 151-3; *Irshad ul-Mustqim*, 294b; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 61b; Ali-ud-din, 111a; Shah Yusaf, 55b-56a; Elliot, VIII, 114-5; Sarkar, I, 417-9.

[2]Khushwaqt Rai, 82; Ali-ud-din, 111b.

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Sikhs. To start with he confiscated their *jagirs* and stopped their allowance. Then he ordered his *jizairchis* to pursue the Sikhs and slay them wherever they were found. *The eye-witness Miskin* in his *Tazkira* on folios 68-9 makes the following observation:—"Muin appointed most of them *(jizairchis)* to the task of chastising the Sikhs. They ran after these wretches (up to) 80 kms (in a day) and slew them wherever they stood up to oppose them. Everybody who brought Sikh heads (to Muin) received a reward of Rs. 10 per head. Anybody who brought a horse (belonging to a Sikh) could keep it as his own. Whosoever lost his own horse by chance in the fight (with the Sikhs) got another in its place from the government stable." Muin thus succeeded in executing thousands of Sikhs, but, says a Muslim historian, "The arrow once shot and the time once passed cannot be recalled, the city was ruined."[1]

Nasir Khan's rebellion, July, 1750[2]

The sufferings of Sikhs were not destined to last very long as Muin-ul-Mulk was called upon to divert his attention to a more serious menace, created by the rebellion of his trusted officer, Nasir Khan, the governor of the *chahar mahal.*

Nasir Khan, the ex-Mughal Governor of Kabul and Peshawar, came to Muin to seek employment. Muin was glad to have such an experienced administrator under him and appointed him in charge

[1]Miskin, 68-9. This kind of warfare with the Sikhs continued for about four years. Ali-ud-din, 111b.

[2]Sir Jadunath Sarkar in his *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, 416, assigns this event to July, 1749 as the probable date. The actual date of this occurrence came nowhere to my notice in any original work. Following the order of events described by two contemporary writers as given below, I place it one year later, i.e. July, 1750.

(i) *Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi:* (1) Abdali's II invasion, folios 46-8; (2) Nasir Khan's rebellion, folio 65; (3) Shah Nawaz's revolt, folios 67-8.

(ii) Miskin's *Tazkira:* Abdali's II invasion, folio 53; Nasir Khan's rebellion, folios 54-7; Shahnawaz's revolt, folios 59-62. Sir Jadunath in the same book on page 427, following *Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi* folios 83-4, says that when Ahmad Shah Abdali wrote to Muin in December, 1751, demanding the revenues of the Chahar Mahals, the latter replied, "that Nasir Khan, who had administered the Chahar Mahals in the first two years, had run away with all the revenues collected during that time and that he himself could pay the tribute for the only year that he had held the tract." It clearly shows that the *Chahar Mahals* remained in possession of Nasir Khan from 1748 to 1750 and in Muin's own occupation from 1750 to 1751.

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of the *chahar mahal.*

It transpired later that he was in league with the Delhi Wazir Safdar Jang, who out of envy and hatred for the Turani party of which Muin was a prominent leader, wanted to oust Muin and instal Nasir Khan in the Lahore viceroyalty. Nasir Khan increased hisarmy and seduced 1,000 of Muin's Mughalia troops by temptation of higher salary. This ungratefulness offended Muin, who marched against him and having defeated him near Sialkot, dismissed him in disgrace to Delhi.

Revolt of Shahnawaz Khan, c. September, 1750[1]

Muin was hardly free from this trouble when he was called upon to face another danger, namely the revolt raised by Shahnawaz Khan who had been appointed to the independent charge of Multan by the Delhi Wazir thus depriving Muin of a great part of his administrative area. He was also prompted to oust Muin by a definite promise of appointing him the viceroy of Lahore.[2] Shahnawaz increased his army to 15,000, and then on a pretext of paying homage to the tomb of his father, requested Muin to permit him to come to Lahore. The latter was willing to grant this request provided he would come unattended by his troops. Shahnawaz showed an insulting attitude and Muin prepared for war.

This created a serious situation for Muin. There was the danger of the Sikhs who might take advantage of the absence of troops from Lahore. Diwan Kaura Mal was ordered to proceed to Multan to punish Shahnawaz. He requested Muin to permit him to enlist the Sikhs in his army for this occasion. But Muin had lurking suspicion against them. On being reassured he permitted Kaura Mal to recruit them. So Kaura Mal took a strong body of the Sikhs with him to Multan.[3]

A sharp engagement took place between the opponents. Shahna-

[1]*Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 65; Miskin, 55-7; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 80a: Sarkar, I, 416; *Farhat-un-Nazirin*, in Elliot, VIII, 166.

[2]*Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 67-8; *Miskin*, 59. It may be remarked that though Shahnawaz was a scion of the Turani party, yet he had recently embraced the Shia religion and thus had become a co-religionist of the Wazir.

[3]Ratan Singh, 404; Gian Singh, 690; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 87, places this number at 10,000. They also supply further details about the payment to the Sikhs. The daily wages of a footman were 50 paise, of a horseman one rupee and of a chief five rupees.

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waz Khan fought bravely, but was ultimately defeated and killed.[1] Kaura Mal cut off his head and sent it to Muin, who being pleased with his Diwan's splendid achievement, conferred upon him the title of Maharajah and installed him in the subordinate governorship of the Multan Province.

The services of the Sikhs were highly rewarded by Kaura Mal who retained a number of them in his service at Multan and also secured for them a *jagir* worth about a lakh and a quarter of rupees a year from Muin in the parganahs of Chunian and Jhabāl in the Lahore District. The Sikhs afterwards gathered at Amritsar on the occasion of the Diwali and Nawab Kapur Singh started a free kitchen with the income of the *jagir*.[2]

Sikh repression begins again

As soon as Muin-ul-Mulk was free from these troubles and felt strong enough to cope with the Sikh problem he renewed his policy of repression. It seems he was convinced, and perhaps rightly so, that the Sikhs would not rest contented with the allowance of the *jagir* granted to them and that they were only biding their time to recoup their strength for creating fresh troubles in the province, as they had done on more than one occasion previously. This energetic Governor did not believe in half measures. Accordingly, he set the Government machinery, both military and civil, once again in motion and revived the old orders to the district and village officials for the arrest of the Sikhs. The people were forbidden under penalty of death to give shelter to the members of this community.

These measures of the Government succeeded in driving the Sikhs from the neighbourhood of towns and villages to places of shelter along the banks of the Ravi, the Beas and the Satluj. They could have gone to the distant and impenetrable retreats in hills and deserts, but they preferred these easy refuges in order to harass the Nawab and his Mughalia troops, though at the risk of their own

[1]The grave of Shahnawaz Khan exists in the east of Multan near the tomb of Hazrat Shams Tabriz (Sohan Lal, I, 131).

[2]*Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 67-8; Miskin, 59-62; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 80a; Khushwaqt Rai, 84-5; Ali-ud-din, 109b-110a; Shah Yusaf, 53b-55b; Sarkar, I, 416-7. Gian Singh, 694 (The Sikhs henceforth gave Kaura Mal the name of Mitha Mal. Kaura in Panjabi means bitter and mitha means sweet. Ratan Singh, 404; Gian Singh, 691).

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lives. Moreover, they wanted to have a dip in the tank of nectar. The Nawab's servants and troops searched for them in villages and when they got hold of any Sikh, slew him at once. If any other man was found living in the style of a Sikh, he was also arrested and his property confiscated.[1]

On 3rd October, 1751, Muin-ul-Mulk despatched Mumin Khan to chastise the Sikhs who were creating disturbances even in the close neighbourhood of Lahore. When they marched towards the hills, Mir Amanullah Khan, *Faujdar* of Eminabad, with 20 *jizairs*, *5 rahkalas* and one big gun, was called upon to join Mumin Khan, whom he had given clear instructions to root out this sect, with the assistance of the zamindars of the submontane tracts.[2]

The Sikhs are driven out of the Panjab plains

The policy of driving the Sikhs from post to pillar was so vigorously enforced that they were compelled once more to seek shelter in their old resorts in the lower Himalayan spurs, the thick forests of Central and Eastern Panjab and the deserts of Malwa and Bikaner. The Sikhs, who had many a time before seen harder days, did not mind these persecutions.

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The capacity of endurance learned behind the plough stood them in good stead in their places of retirement. They led a life of the greatest danger and the highest usefulness to their co-religionists. They were blessed with a cavalry figure, excellent spirit, a perfect body, a love of adventure and an intense zest for life. They possessed the horse gift. They loved and understood horses, and horses loved and understood them. They seldom touched horses with whip and spur. They groomed them thoroughly every day, fondled them and got them used to their voice, hands and smell. Seizing a lock of a horse's mane, they vaulted on to its bare back. They moved about with faultless smartness.

Each 'Singh' was a lion of strength and courage. Stock of provisions he had none, and the sufferings of his body almost annihilated every sentiment of pleasure. They were men of simple passions and simple methods of expressing them. They wore the minimum of clothing and the maximum of armour.[3]

The reign of terror failed in achieving its object. The oppressed

[1]Khushwaqt Rai, 79.
[2]*S. P. D., Miscellaneous Papers*, p. 3, no. 1271, dated 14.10.1751.
[3]G.R.C. Williams. in *Calcutta Review*, 1875.

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Jat peasantry from fear of the Government torture and molestation, fled from their fields and homes and converted themselves to the creed of Guru Gobind Singh and thus the Khalsa ranks began to swell even in exile. "The Sikh Uhlan's endurance and rapidity of movement were quite commensurate with his capacity, enabling him to baffle, if not defy, superior numbers.....At a pinch, he could march some twenty or thirty miles a day on no better fare than a little parched gram washed down with pure cold water. A tent he despised, baggage in the ordinary sense of the word he had none...Besides his weapons his whole kit consisted of horse-gear, a few of the simplest cooking utensils, and two blankets, one for himself, and another for his faithful steed.....Although his tactics mainly resolved themselves into a prolonged series of skirmishes conducted somewhat after the Parthian fashion, yet in the strife of men contending hand to hand he was terrible, though helpless against good artillery."[1] 'During the campaigns of Muin's officers against the Sikhs, the Hindu peasants were also persecuted on many allegations such as supplying food to the Sikh outlaws, giving them shelter and avoiding disclosure of their whereabouts. Therefore daily additions to the numbers of the Sikhs took place openly at every place. Some of the members of the zamindar families, under tyrannical oppression of the Muslim officers every day left their homes, took *pahul* and received free supply of food, clothing, arms and horses from the Sardars.'[2]

Muin fights single-handed against Abdali, Dec., 1751–March, 1752

The Government of Muin-ul-Mulk was compelled to suspend its activities against the Sikhs as they were called upon to face a graver danger. The intrepid Ahmad Shah Abdali, again appeared on the scene in December, 1751. The pretext for this invasion was the failure of Muin (as might have been expected) in remitting to Kandahar the promised annual revenues of the *chahar mahal.* He despatched Harun Khan as his ambassador in advance to the court of Lahore demanding the fulfilment of the engagement. Muin delayed the negotiations in order to gain time for consultations with Kaura Mal whom he had summoned from Multan. On the arrival of the latter it was decided that the Governor could

[1]G.R.C. Williams, in *Calcutta Review*, 1875.
[2]Cf. Sohan Lal, I, 130.

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not pay any revenue and this fact was communicated to the *Vakil* of the Abdali with an excuse that owing to recent disturbances in the province no revenues could be collected.[1]

The Shah sent another agent in the person of Diwan Sukhjiwan Mal to Lahore pressing for part payment of 24 lakhs of rupees. Muin again expressed inability to pay the arrears on the ground that the two years' revenues of the *chahar mahal* had been appropriated to himself by Nasir Khan, and as the farmers had run away from the villages on account of Abdali's invasion no money could be collected. He paid him, however, 9 lakhs of rupees and promised to remit the balance on the Durrani's immediate withdrawal to his own frontiers. Abdali took the money and continued his march to Lahore.[2]

Muin was naturally suspicious of the Sikhs that they might take advantage of the troubled state of the country and might help the Afghan invader. He therefore held hopes to them through his Diwan Kaura Mal that after the retirement of the Abdali, he would give them the parganahs of Kathua, Basohli and Doon. Some of the Sikhs were also recruited in the army for the purpose of supplying grain and grass and leading foraging attacks on the Afghans.

Ratan Singh says that Sukha Singh, a Sikh of considerable valour and daring, lost his life, while on a foraging expedition, fighting against Durrani soldiers. Ahmad Shah Abdali is said to have engaged a number of Sikhs in his service, obviously with a view to dissuading their brethren from fighting on the side of Muin and he succeeded in his attempt, for we learn from the author of *Panth Prakash* that the Sikhs who were employed for collecting provisions for Muin's army relaxed their efforts.[3]

The report of Abdali's advance caused a panic in the city of Lahore and the rich people fled to Delhi or to Jammu where they expected to get shelter. The Governor himself is reported to have sent his family and treasures to the care of Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu. Muin then crossed the Ravi, opposite Shahdara, at the head of 50,000 horse and foot and 400 guns, and took up his position at the Bridge of Shah Daula, 36 kms above Lahore on the Ravi.

[1]Cf. *S. P. D., Miscellaneous Papers*, nos. 1930 and 1944; Sohan Lal, I, 132-3.
[2]*Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 83-5; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 114; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 122a.
[3]Ratan Singh, 408-11; Gian Singh, 696; Miskin, 75.

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the Durrani. Ahmad Shah appointed Abdullah Khan the Governor of Kashmir and Sukhjiwan Mal, a Khatri of Bhera in West Panjab, as head of the Secretariat.[1]

Sikh ravages, December, 1751—March, 1752

The four months of the fresh Durrani invasion (December, 1751—March, 1752) were favourable to the further rise of the Sikhs as they afforded the Sikhs an ideal opportunity to renew their brigandage over a comparatively wider area. Muin, his *faujdars* of various divisions of the province and his troops were too busy with the foreign invader to pay any attention to the Sikhs and hence their depredations, slaughtering and burning remained for this interval unchecked. They sacked the Bari Doab and moved on to the Jullundur Doab which also lay unprotected as Adina Beg Khan was in Lahore fighting on the side of Muin. They swept it clean of all riches[2] and utterly ruined the noted Muslim families of the place. Then they crossed the Satluj and extended their forays as far as Thanesar and retired towards Hissar. An entry in *Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, on folio 132, dated 15th December, 1751 runs as follows:—"In these days the Sikhs, the worshippers of Nanak, came from the Lahore side, stayed in Sarhind for some time plundering and ravaging the towns of that district, and then advanced towards Jind. Kamgar Khan Baluch, the Governor of Hissar and Sonepat, fought with them and killed many villains of that sect. Then they fled away towards Hissar."[3] A part of the Dal Khalsa appears also to have penetrated in the west into the Rechna and Chaj Doabs and to have committed desolation in that part of the country quite unmolested. "The Sikhs who were rising into importance had in 1752 under their leaders Charat Singh and Gurbakhsh Singh come as far as Sayyid Kasran and Basali and had plundered those towns. They compelled Muqarrab Khan (the Gakhar chief of Gujrat) to return from Lahore and to yield up his possessions beyond the Chenab."[4] Thus the Sikhs acquired a lot of rich booty besides gaining large numbers of fresh recruits.

[1] *Khazana-e-Amira*, 114; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 122a.

[2] Bakhtmal, 67-8, 71; Sohan Lal, I, 135.

[3] "They inflicted terrible losses and pains on the ancient families of Pirzadas and Sayyids." (Sohan Lal, I, 135). "The Sikhs particularly punished the butchers for killing cows." (Ratan Singh, 434 and Gian Singh, 701); Browne, II, 17.

[4] *JASB*, Vol. 40, Part I, 1871, p. 99.

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Persecution of Sikhs renewed, March, 1572—November, 1753

After the war, Muin-ul-Mulk was quite secure in his position. His connections with his rivals at Delhi came to an end and the danger of the foreign invasion was over. He already led a lordly style of life and now wholly plunged himself into ease and pleasure.[1] He could not however tolerate disorder and lawlessness in his province, especially when no external danger existed. Reports of Sikh ravages in all parts of the country were pouring into the capital. So he immediately after his submission to Ahmad Shah Abdali despatched Sadiq Beg Khan and Adina Beg Khan to punish the Sikhs in the Jullundur Doab where they had returned from Hissar. Adina Beg Khan hailed this opportunity, in order to wash away the suspicions of treachery attached to him at Lahore during the time of the Durrani's third invasion.

The commanders entered the Jullundur Doab in pursuit of the Sikhs. They received intelligence that the Sikhs had assembled near Makhowal, probably to celebrate the Baisakhi festival at Anandpur.[2] The Sikhs were taken quite unawares, because they had received news of the Durrani siege going on in Lahore and were sure that neither Muin nor his officers would be free to turn their attention to them. They were deep in the midst of their festivities when Adina Beg and Sadiq Beg suddenly fell upon them and put a large number of them to the sword while the rest were forced to escape for their lives. But such was their hardihood and doggedness that soon after they began to plunder again in small parties. They finally dispersed in all directions. Malcolm blames Adina Beg Khan for the Sikh plunders. He says:—"That able but artful chief considered this turbulent tribe in no other light than as the means of his personal advancement, he was careful not to reduce them altogether; but, after defeating them in an action, which was fought near Makhoval, he entered into a secret understanding with them, by which, though their excursions were limited, they enjoyed a security to which they had been unaccustomed, and from which they

[1]Ahmad Shah, 868. ("His household expenditure was also very heavy on account of his lordly and extravagant style of living, as we see vividly illustrated in the memoirs of his page Tahmasp Miskin." Sarkar, I, 424); Browne, II, 17.

[2]Browne, II, 17, calls it Holi, which is apparently wrong as it fell on the 18th February when Muin was shut up in trenches at Lahore, hard pressed by the Abdali.

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gathered strength and resources for future efforts."[1]

Muin, however, did not give up the pursuit of the Sikhs. After the return of Adina Beg Khan another force under Mir Mumin Khan was despatched in the direction of the Lakhi Jungle where the Sikhs were reported to have taken shelter. The Muslim troops were very much harassed by the Sikhs and consequently Mir Mumin was recalled. A fresh expedition was next sent under Husain Khan. This officer proved too cunning for the Sikhs and challenged them to an open fight rather than resorting to their guerilla tactics. The Sikhs were inveigled into the trap and ultimately defeated and made to leave the field.[2]

But the Sikhs managed to escape to the northern parts of the Bari Doab where they indiscriminately plundered the unguarded towns. The Governor now proceeded in person. The account of this expedition which was led by Muin towards the close of 1752, is thus given by his page Tahmas Miskin:—"When the Nawab Sahib was out on an administrative tour in the Batala District he heard that a large body of the Sikhs were causing disturbances in the neighbourhood and were closing the roads and ruining the cultivators. He sent Sayyid Jamil-ud-din Khan with his Bakhshi Ghazi Beg Khan to punish them. These officers marched to the scene, fought the Sikhs and put them to flight. Nine hundreds of the Sikh infantry threw themselves into the small fort of Ram Rauni, close to Chak Guru, which Jamil-ud-din immediately invested. After a few days the garrison rushed out sword in hand, and were slain."[3] Muin felt exasperated and eventually he ordered his troops to seize the women and children of the Sikhs. His soldiers secured a large number of such captives and committed unspeakable atrocities on them. The Sikh women, it may be said to their credit, faced these calamities heroically and often laid down their lives in the scuffle. George Thomas states: "Instances indeed have not unfrequently occurred, in which they (Sikh women) have actually taken up arms to defend their habitations from the desultory attacks of the enemy, and throughout the contest behaved themselves with an intrepidity of spirit, highly praiseworthy."[4]

[1]Browne, II, 17; Malcolm, 92; Bakhtmal, 71-2; Forster, I, 314.

[2]Ratan Singh, 307-10; Gian Singh, 701-5. This fight took place in the bet (island) of the Satluj near Kot Budha Gaon.

[3]Miskin, 81; Sarkar, I, 426.

[4]Gian Singh, 708-12; George Thomas, *Memoirs*, 75.

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The Sikhs resisted these outrages, but in the struggle they suffered heavily, as they were helpless against light portable artillery. Maulvi Nur Ahmad Chishti says that Muin "killed thousands of Sikhs." "Once on the day of Id he beheaded 1100 Sikhs." He persecuted Hindus as well. The Maulvi observes: "Mir Mannu was a notorious bigot. He would collect from individuals sacred threads weighing one kilogram and a quarter, and would have his dinner after getting them burnt. He massacred the Sikhs. When they became scarce, he proclaimed a reward of Rs 25 per Sikh head."[1]

They now sought refuge in the impenetrable retreats of the northern hills and gave temporary consolation to their afflicted hearts by singing the following couplet of their own composition:

"Mir Mannu sādī dātri,
Asin Mir Mannu de soe,
Jiyon jiyon sānun wadhdā,
Asin sau sau dune hoe."[2]

(Mir Mannu is our sickle and we are his grass blades; as he cuts us, more than two hundreds of times we grow.)

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But out of the ashes of the martyrs the Sikhs arose with greater glory and splendour. Muin's efforts availed him nothing. The Sikhs never gave him peace. The harder he grew the bolder they became. With the beginning of the cold weather in 1753 the Sikhs renewed their raids with greater vigour and infested the very environs of Lahore. Muin undertook an expedition in person which is thus described by Miskin:—"He marched out of Lahore to a distance of 25 kms and encamped near village Tilakpur (Malakpur according to *Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, folio 282, 65 kms north-east of Lahore), situated on the bank of the Ravi. He halted there for a long time and sent out Mughalia troops under Khwajah Mirza in every direction to suppress the Sikhs wherever he heard of their risings. Khwajah Mirza at the head of his troops galloped off 60 to 100 kms. Whenever he got a clue of the whereabouts of the Sikhs, he suddenly fell upon them and slew them. The person who brought Sikhs alive or their heads or their horses, received prizes. Every Mughal who lost his own horse in battle was provided with another of a better quality at the expense of the Government. The Sikhs

[1]Nur Ahmad Chishti, *Tahqiqat-e-Chishti*, Lahore, 1906, pp. 82, 101, 648, 694 (Urdu).

[2]Ali-ud-din, 112a; Nur Ahmad Chishti, 100, 648, 694.

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who were captured alive were sent to hell by being beaten with wooden mallets. At times Adina Beg Khan sent 40 or 50 Sikh captives from the Doab District (Jullundur); they were as a rule killed with the strokes of wooden hammers." Nur Ahmad Chishti says that in this expedition Muin killed 4,000 Sikhs.[1]

According to a rough estimate, Muin destroyed not less than 30,000 Sikhs.

Swelling of the Dal Khalsa

As we have seen in the previous pages, it was for a little over five years that Muin struggled with the Sikhs; but he cannot be said to have succeeded. Several forces, internal as well as external, working at the period, were responsible for this state of affairs. The organisation of the Sikhs into a compact body which was not unwieldy at the time, stood them in good stead in such dangerous days. The common danger and strong religious feelings kept them under discipline and made every Sikh obey his leader in order to work for the cause of the *Panth*. Moreover, common grievances, common sufferings, a common faith and a common purpose had created feelings of brotherhood and love among the members of the Dal Khalsa.

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On the other hand, the peasantry of the Panjab had grown restless and discontented under heavy revenue charges and by the ill-treatment of the revenue officers and the Mughalia troops.[2] Finding no other way of escape from this predicament, they preferred the adoption of Sikhism in order to get rid of their sad plight and to enjoy the privileges of power, plunder and punishing their enemies. Consequently where the villagers underwent oppression, they grew their hair, shouted *Akal! Akal*, took the *pahul*, and converted themselves to the Sikh religion and in this way the number of the Dal Khalsa began to increase by leaps and bounds.[3]

Thus the very forces which were aimed at the destruction of the Sikhs, failing in hitting the mark, hurt the initiator of the scheme and strengthened that which they were meant to destroy.

Death of Muin-ul-Mulk, 3rd November, 1753

Nature, however, would not let the Sikhs to be tried beyond

[1] *Tahqiqat-e-Chishti*, 649.
[2] Miskin, 84.
[3] *Siyar*, III, 50-1; Browne, II, 16; Bakhtmal, 67-8.

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human endurance. Their misfortunes ended. A period of three years to do whatever they liked was afforded to them by the sudden and unexpected death of Muin-ul-Mulk on 3rd November, 1753, at Tilakpur, on the bank of the Ravi, 25 kms from Lahore, probably under the effects of poisoning at the hands of one of his officers.[1]

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[1]Miskin, who was then serving Muin as his personal attendant gives interesting details about his master's tragic end. (Vide pp. 87-90). He was buried near Shahid Ganj in the mansion of Abdur Rahim Khan, son-in-law of Abdus Samad Khan. In the reign of Sher Singh, the Sikhs in a moment of the religious frenzy, dismantled the building, dug out the remains of Muin and scattered them to the winds (*Lahore Gazetteer*, p. 28; Khushwaqt Rai, 88).

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CHAPTER 6

The Rakhi System or Protectorate, November, 1753—April, 1757

Sikhs are left unhampered, November, 1753

The death of the capable and vigorous Governor Muin-ul-Mulk removed the chief obstacle in the way of the Sikhs. Henceforth for a period of three years unbounded confusion and anarchy prevailed in the Panjab. This short period of three years saw as many as nine[1] short-lived successions to the *subahdari* of this frontier province. The Delhi court, involved in the grip of civil wars, treachery and murder, utterly failed in taking care of the Panjab affairs, while the Durrani was too absorbed in quelling disturbances in his own newly-built and disjointed empire and hence could do nothing but send small helps to the Lahore *subahdar* from time to time. In the following pages we will try to present a brief sketch of the affairs of Lahore and to show how they offered the most favourable opportunity to the Sikhs for making unhampered progress and how the sect availed themselves of it.

Baby rule and Petticoat government provided for the Panjab

On the death of the last imperial viceroy of the Panjab, Emperor Ahmad Shah appointed his three-year old son Mahmud Khan viceroy of the two provinces of Lahore and Multan on the 13th November. The robes of honour were conferred on the prince in the Diwan-e-Khas; and quite in the fitness of things, the baby viceroy of three years was provided with a two-year old Deputy in the person of Muhammad Amin Khan, son of late Muin-ul-Mulk, for whom a *khilat* and jewels were sent through Mir Jamil-ud-din Khan. The actual administration of the province was entrusted to Mumin Khan.[2]

[1]Vide p. 185, f-n. 1.

[2]The chronicler of the Imperial court records in his diary:—"(Muin) always

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The Panjab since 1752 had formed a part of the Durrani Empire and hence its *subahdar* drew his real power, not from the Delhi Emperor but from the king of Afghanistan. Mughlani Begam (Muin's widow), a lady of remarkable address and spirit, was not satisfied with having received a formal nomination from Delhi, nor was the assistant Mumin Khan. Both of them opened negotiations with Ahmad Shah Abdali and in January, 1754, received confirmation from him. This occasion was celebrated with great pomp and show and there were great rejoicings.

Death of Muhammad Amin Khan (May, 1754) and Begam's profligacy

Bhikari Khan, surnamed Roshan-ud-daulah, Rustam-e-Jang, a Turki general, "the dearest friend and most trusted factotum of Muin," and the "centre of all affairs in the province in his time,"[1] revolted against the Begam. She cleverly won over other Turki nobles and succeeded in removing the threat of civil war. But the baby Governor, Muhammad Amin Khan, died early in May, 1754, displaying the same symptoms of poisoning as his father.[2] The new Emperor, Alamgir II, appointed Mumin Khan Governor of the Panjab on 25th October, 1754, but his authority was negatived by the Begam in whose hands lay the real power.

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Mughlani Begam established herself securely in the seat of the provincial government. But no sooner had she done so than she began to betray the frailty of her sex. All the contemporary evidence agrees in saying that the widow fell into a course of pleasure in which she was led by her eunuchs, so much so that she foolishly threw all modesty to the winds and became notorious for having lost her character.[3]

waged war with the Sikhs, the worshippers of Nanak.....(He) was a bold and valiant man. His presence in Lahore, the frontier on that side of the country where there was the permanent problem of expelling Ahmad Abdali, was a great satisfaction." (*Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 257-8.)

[1]*Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 282-3: Siyar, III, 51; Sarkar, I, 439.

[2]"Many people believed that Bhikari Khan poisoned the innocent (child) through eunuch Zamurrad who had access to him." Miskin, 97-8.) This news reached Delhi on the 2nd June, 1754. (*Delhi Chronicle*, 92.)

[3]The Begam's connections of clandestine love with Ghazi Beg Khan Bakhshi became so notorious that this talk was on the lips of everybody, big and small, in Lahore. (Miskin, 99).

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Eunuchs' rule at Lahore

These were not the times when a woman viceroy could display much activity in controlling the affairs of the administration, particularly when there was the serious problem of suppressing associations of refractory people like those of the Sikhs. Eunuchs were the only medium through whom Mughlani Begam conducted the State affairs and it became, to all intents and purposes, eunuchs' rule at Lahore. The Diwan, Bakhshi and other government officials waited in the *deorhi* (portico) of the Begam and received her orders through Mian Khush-faham, Mian Arjmand and Mian Mahabbat. These eunuchs took part in all the discussions and became her chief confidants in all affairs great or small. Matters were made worse by the fact that these eunuchs never agreed together but constantly quarrelled[1] among themselves.

The eunuchs' rule and the Begam's profligacy[1] disgusted the Turkish nobles who came from the same stock in Central Asia as the Begam's father and husband, and now they were resolved to defy such a degraded authority.

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Three Sikhs drive away a Mughal Regiment, c. March, 1754

The utter wretchedness of the Delhi Empire and the misrule of the Begam so emboldened the Turki generals in Lahore that each of them considered himself capable of carving out an independent principality for himself. They thought that their own rule would be more efficient and more conducive to the happiness and prosperity of the people than that of Mughlani Begam.[2]

Bhikari Khan's rebellion was followed by that of Qasim Khan, a Turk, who had previously enlisted as a soldier under Muin. He had

[1]Her name was connected with the youthful page Miskin, our valuable informer, by an aunt of Imad ul-Mulk Ghazi-ud-din, the Delhi Wazir, who intended to kill the page, but Miskin escaped through the Begam's assistance. (Miskin, 122). The Begam tried her best to seduce Miskin, offered temptations of costly gifts and kept him in her private chamber during whole nights. (Miskin, 159-60). In 1758 the Begam was at Jammu where she fell into a course of dissolute conduct with her old eunuch Shahbaz and "in the whole city of Jammu, the notoriety of this affair was talked of for about two or three months." (Miskin, 230). The Begam then left Jammu and retired to a neighbouring place called Samba where she quietly married Shahbaz. (Miskin, 231). Cf. Ghulam Ali, 26; Shiv Prashad, 33b; Khazana-e-Amira, 98-9. (All contemporary authorities.)

[2]Siyar, II, 52.

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risen to the position of a *Jamadar*, and had helped Mughlani Begam against Bhikari Khan. In appreciation of his services the Begam appointed him to the *faujdari of* Patti *parganah* in Lahore District.

Qasim Khan who was lovingly called by the Mughlani Begam as her son, was provided with some pieces of cannon, 300 *jizairchis*, who were Badakhshanis just arrived in the Panjab to seek their fortune, 100 Turki cavalry, a few thousand horse and foot, and several thousand rupees in cash. He was accompanied by Tahmas Khan Miskin who supplies us a fascinating picture of his march from Lahore to Patti:

"Qasim Khan left Lahore and encamped at the Garden of Lakhpat Rai, at a distance of 6 kms. The following day we also joined him at the Garden. He gave us a warm reception and presented to each as a mark of hospitality two gold coins to be spent at a dance in the night. By chance the same day an encounter with the Sikhs took place. The people insisted very much on his taking the initiative in attacking the wretches and putting them to the sword so that they might be extirpated; but Qasim Khan did not agree. In the evening we came back and entered our camps. Just then the Sikhs came fighting from behind and reached near our camps. Then they returned, and we passed the night (in suspense). On the following day we marched towards Patti and encamped at a Mughal village named Damomodaran at a distance of 36 kms. The headmen and people of the place came to pay their respects. All were captured and put under arrest; while the fort and the village were plundered, and the latter was besieged on the plea that they were in league with the Sikhs. We lay encamped there for a month, and none of their women or children who had been imprisoned were set at liberty. The Sikhs attacked us daily both the times (morning and evening), fought and retired.

"After a few days Qasim Khan appointed one of his brothers named Alim Beg Khan, at the head of 1,000 horse and foot to lead an attack by way of *chapawal* on a Sikh village where they had assembled. The Sikhs got ready, and the fight began in which the perseverance of Alim Beg Khan gave way and he finding himself unequal to the task returned, giving up all his 300 Badakhshani foot soldiers to slaughter. On learning this news, Qasim Khan mounted and started for the place. I also accompanied by two horsemen followed and joined him at a distance of 6 kms. I saw that the men

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were coming back running (from the field) and I found my fellow-tribesmen, Muhammad Aqil, etc. who had gone with the *chapawal*, safe and sound. We proceeded farther. I was astonished to see only three Sikh cavaliers driving away the troops. I galloped after them for 3 kms. I came across a large number of men lying dead on the way. But Muhammad Aqil dragged me back from there after a great persistence. We reached our camp safely that day. The next day I gave a piece of advice to Qasim Khan ; but he did not agree and some hot words passed between us. Thereupon I came back to Lahore.

"After a few days he also marched back from this place without achieving anything and having suffered from extreme hardships and difficulties. He halted on the bank of the river (Ravi) 15 kms from Lahore. I went to see him. He said: 'I have won over 8,000 Sikhs by friendly negotiations. I will soon seize Lahore, and then after enlisting more troops will take Delhi and will make myself *Padishah*.' He offered the Chancellorship to a penniless Khwajah, the fugitive *ex-faujdar* of Saharanpur and the imperial Paymaster-Generalship to me while then I was a lad of fifteen only. I told him that such useless talk did not behove him, and that he would repent of it in a few days. After five days he left the place and encamped outside the city (Lahore) near Shah Balawal. I again paid him a visit. He had nothing left with him. He had uselessly distributed thousands of rupees worth of matchlocks, bows and other arms and materials and gifts among his Sikh allies, while his own troopers clamoured for their pay. They besieged him and insulted him. The same day they cut off his tent ropes, dragged him to the Begam who confined him within her palace enclosure and kept him under strict guard."[1]

A series of revolts, December, 1754 to October, 1756

Meanwhile the Turkish soldiery were disgusted with the Begam's profligacy. In December, 1754, the Mughalia courtiers decided that "as a fissure had appeared in the family honour of the late Nawab," the best course for them was to entrust Khwajah Mirza Khan with the administration of the province. Consequently Khwajah Mirza came to Lahore, confined the Begam in a house and assumed the viceroyalty of the Panjab. The Begam cleverly managed to depute Khwajah Abdullah Khan, her mother's brother, to Ahmad Shah

[1]Miskin, 94-6.

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Abdali, whose troops restored the Begam to authority (April, 1755). In July, 1755 Khwajah Abdullah confined the Begam to her mother's house and became undisputed master of Lahore. "This Khwajah, closing the gates of the city, plundered much from the inhabitants of Lahore both Hindus and Muslims, on the plea of their having been associates of Bhikari Khan, and slew many people. Vast numbers were ruined. Grain and other stuffs became very dear."[1]

Adina Beg Khan, the *faujdar* of the Jullundur Doab, took advantage of the unrest prevailing in the provincial capital. He marched upon Lahore, drove away Abdullah and appointed Sadiq Beg Khan his deputy to manage the State affairs. The Begam secretly sought help from the Durrani, who despatched Jahan Khan to restore her to the *subahdari*. Sadiq Beg fled to Sarhind (*c.* December, 1755), while the Begam assumed full power with Khwajah Abdullah as her deputy.[2] In March, 1756 Imad-ul-Mulk, the Delhi Wazir, made Mughlani Begam captive, confiscated her property, entrusted the Government of Lahore and Multan to Adina Beg Khan for a tribute of 30 lakhs a year, and appointed Sayyid Jamil-ud-din Khan in charge of Lahore as Adina's assistant. Khwajah Abdullah brought a Durrani contingent from Kandahar, expelled Jamil-ud-din and himself became the viceroy with Khwajah Mirza as his assistant[3] (4th October, 1756).

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Dissolution of government in the Panjab

The story narrated in the previous pages is a sickening tale of revolutions, counter-revolutions, rapine, treachery and murder prevailing in the capital of the Panjab after the death of Muin. Within the short space of three years (November, 1753—October, 1756) nine changes[4] had taken place in the office of the Governor, and the administration was gradually breaking up. Multan was under

[1]Miskin, 99-107; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 112.

[2]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 124, 151; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 9.

[3]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 130-31, 151; *Delhi Chronicle*, 131-32; Miskin, 120-6; Ghulam Ali, 26-7; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 52; Shiv Prashad, 33b; Shakir, 79-80; *Siyar*, III, 53; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 98b; *Maasir-ul-Umara*, II, 851-2.

[4]Muhammad Amin Khan from November, 1753 to May, 1754: Mughlani Begam from May, 1754 to October, 1754; Mumin Khan from October to December, 1754; Khawajah Mirza from December, 1754 to April, 1755; Mughlani Begam from April to July, 1755; Khwajah Abdullah from July to September

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a separate *subahdar* directly responsible to the Durrani.[1] The four *mahals* of Aurangabad, Gujrat, Sialkot, and Pasrur were ruled over by Rustam Khan directly appointed by Ahmad Shah. Jullundur and Sarhind were under Adina Beg Khan, who did not care to recognize the authority of the Lahore Governor. The only districts which owned allegiance to Lahore were in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital, the chief places being Eminabad, Shahdara and Cheemah Gakhar (16 kms south of Wazirabad). The powerful local zamindars, on the other hand, were gathering troops and assuming an independent attitude. Gakhars and Tiwanas in the Sind Sagar Doab; Waraich chiefs and Muqarrab Khan in the Chaj Doab; Chathas and zamindars of Bajoh in the Rechna Doab; Hindu *faqirs* of Gurdaspur and Jandiala, Randhawa zamindars of Batala *parganah* and Afghans of Kasur in the Bari Doab; Rajputs of Talwan, Phagwara and Kapurthala, and Afghans of Alawalpur in the Jullundur Doab were becoming all powerful.

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Rapid rise of the Sikhs, November, 1753—October, 1756

This state of affairs in the province offered a golden opportunity to the ever-vigilant Sikhs. They rose once more with greater vigour and firmer resolution. The sudden death of Muin had strengthened their faith that they were destined to play the role of rulers in their fatherland. "Their number and audacity," says Prinsep, "accordingly increased rapidly, and bands of these bearded depredators were continually to be seen traversing the various districts of the Punjab, sweeping off the flocks and herds, and laying waste the cultivation unless redeemed by a prompt contribution."[2] They punished their enemies and plundered their villages and thus acquired immense booty.[3]

Then they employed Jassa Singh Thoka to rebuild the Ram Rauni fort of Amritsar, which had been demolished by Muin-ul-

1755; Adina Beg Khan from September to December, 1755; Mughlani Begam from January to March, 1756; Adina Beg Khan from March to October, 1756.

[1]Aurangabad is situated opposite the town of Jehlam on the eastern bank of river Jehlam.

[2]Khushwaqt Rai, 89; Ahmad Shah, 870.

[3]They plundered Nur Din ki Sarai, Singhkot, Majitha, Jandiala, Saidewala, Bhurewala, Mandiala, Batala, Bondala, Malpur, Phagwara, Naushahra, Shaikhupura and the villages of Karma Chhina, Rama Randhawa, Mahant Akal Das

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Mulk. Jassa Singh at the head of his contingent together with large numbers of other Sikhs, set to work and fortified it more strongly this time and renamed it Ramgarh (God's fort). Making this place the base of their operations, they sallied out and reached the very environs of Lahore, where they fought and harassed Qasim Khan the *faujdar* designate of Patti, while on his way from Lahore to Patti; and so he was ultimately forced to take 8,000 of them into his service (February–March, 1754). They deserted him after he had provided them with matchlocks, bows and arrows, other war material and gifts worth thousands of rupees.[1]

The Sikhs then advanced towards Eminabad and molested Khwajah Mirza, the *faujdar* of the place. The Khwajah was a man of vigorous nature, and in order to face the Sikh menace he had enlisted five or six thousand fresh Turki troops from his homeland under one of his brothers named Khwajah Qazi. With the help of this strong force he succeeded in expelling the Sikhs from his territory. He, however, could not successfully curb the power of Charat Singh (grandfather of Ranjit Singh) who resided in his neighbourhood.[2] They returned to Lahore. Charat Singh and Jai Singh, at the head of 500 Sikhs, dressed in Muslim garbs, one dark evening entered Lahore by the Shahalami Gate and plundered the rich merchants and jewellers, living near the palaces of Begams known as Parimahal and Rangmahal. Mumin Khan, the then Deputy-Governor (November, 1753—November, 1754), pursued them and punished some of them on whom he could lay his hands. About the end of 1754, the Dal Khalsa ravaged the Ambala District, and about 12,000 Sikhs fell upon Sarhind, plundered the town and then disappeared to Thikriwala. The Sikhs once more repaired towards the provincial capital and when Khwajah Mirza was the Governor of Lahore (December, 1754—April, 1755) they constantly troubled him, though he frequently despatched his brother Khwajah Qazi to punish them. This was for the first time after Banda that the Sikhs had ravaged Sarhind.[3]

Hindalia, Aulia Khan Gheb and Hasna Bhatti. (Ratan Singh, 311-2; Gian Singh, 713).

[1]Miskin, the eye-witness (pp. 94-6), presents a beautiful picture of this incident.

[2]Miskin, 102-5; Bute Shah, 308a.

[3]Ratan Singh, 311-2; Gian Singh, 713-5. (This Mumin Khan is said to have been murdered by the Sikhs, during one of his expeditions against them. Gian

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From the middle of March to the middle of April, 1755, their services were hired by Adina Beg Khan, who collected a huge army of 50,000 horse and nearly the same number of foot to fight against Qutab Khan Rohilla, whom he defeated and killed on the 11th April, 1755 on the bank of the Satluj opposite Ropar. Adina Beg Khan took over the administration of Sarhind, crossed the river Satluj and marched up to Shahabad, Thanesar, Ghuram, Mansurpur and Mustafabad. Emperor Alamgir II conferred on Adina Beg Khan the title of Zafar Jang Bahadur.[1]

From the perusal of a Marathi letter dated June, 1755, it appears that the Sikhs left Adina Beg Khan near Thanesar and advanced farther into Narnaul and Kanaud, the territory of Madho Singh, Raja of Jaipur, and created disturbances there. The Raja sent his agent to the Marathas for help and hired Achyut Rao for Rs. 5,000 per day. When this force allied with that of the Raja approached them, they retired towards the Panjab.[2]

Having come back from their predatory excursion in the territory of the Raja of Jaipur, the Sikhs annoyed Adina Beg Khan and compelled him to cede to them the parganah of Fatahabad, by way of *jagir*, in November, 1755. About April, 1756, they harassed Sayyid Jamil-ud-din in the neighbourhood of Lahore. They afterwards seem to have comfortably settled in the Upper Bari Doab in the districts of Kalanaur, Batala and Amritsar, which became their strongholds in future.[3]

The establishment of the Rakhi system or Protectorate

During this period when anarchy and misrule had become the order of the day both at Delhi and Lahore, a further development in the rise of the Sikh power took place which was soon to lead

Singh, 716-7.) *Kaifiyat Muqadma Lakhnaur Sahib* quoted in Karam Singh, 159-60; Miskin, 105.

[1]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 76-88. (Qutab Khan was the Jagirdar of Parganahs Keranah, Barot, Sardhana and Kandhla. When these territories were made over to the Marathas by the Delhi Wazir, Qutab Khan entered the Sarhind territory on 11th March, 1755 and ravaged Sonepat, Panipat, Karnal, Azimabad and Thanesar and seized Sarhind. He was joined by Jamal Khan of Malerkotla and the Afghan troops of the Sarhind Governor Sadiq Beg Khan. Adina Beg who could not brook the presence of such a formidable foe in his close neighbourhood prepared to oppose him. *Delhi Chronicle*, 122; *Chahar Gulzar Shujai*, 461a; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 98b-99a; *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 56b-57a; Ahmad Shah, 880-81.

[2]*S.P.D.* XXVII, 100.

[3]Griffin's *Rajas*, 458; Miskin, 124; Khushwaqt Rai, 89.

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them to the final stage of their becoming a political power. The peasantry of the Panjab had been ruined by the revenue farmers, Sikh plundering bands, the Government troops and others. Trade had practically come to a stop as the roads and ways had become quite unsafe. In this chaotic state lay the chance of the Khalsa, and they seized it. They were the only organized powerful people among the lawless marauders of the country. Their presence inspired fear and awe not only in the minds of the inhabitants of the country but also in the Government of the day. They offered a plan to the villages individually. The villagers were to place themselves under the protection of the Dal Khalsa on a promise to pay one-fifth of their income twice a year in May and October, at the end of each harvest, *Asarhi* and *Saoni*, known also as *Rabi* and *Kharif*. The Sikhs in return were to afford them full protection against plunder, theft or molestation of any other kind either by themselves or by their neighbours and Government troops. In a word, the safety of their persons and property was to be guaranteed. "Whenever a zamindar has agreed to pay this tribute to any Sikh chief, that chief not only himself refrains from plundering him, but will protect him from all others; and this protection is by general consent held so far sacred, that even if the grand army (Dal Khalsa) passed through a *zamindary* where the safeguards of the lowest Sick chief are stationed, it will not violate them."[1] This system was called *Rakhi* or *Jamdari*.

To the helpless villagers such an offer of peace and safety was a boon, and needless to say many of them fully availed themselves of it. Consequently, in a short time large slices of territory in as many as four out of the five doabs of the Panjab were taken under protection by the Dal. To make the system workable, one or more misls of the Dal combined to take charge of a piece of territory brought under their protection. Besides, a reserve force was stationed at Amritsar for the purpose of reinforcement in case of emergency. Thus, the misls of Karora Singh and Dip Singh went to the southern bank of the Satluj. The Singhpurias and Ahluwalias remained on both sides of the Ghara (the Satluj after its junction with the Beas) Jai Singh Kanhiya and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia retired to the fertile tract of land called Riyarki in the north of Amritsar. The Nakais settled in the Nakka country south of Lahore. Charat Singh Sukar-

[1]Browne, Introduction, VII; Bute Shah, 308a; Ali-ud-din, 171b; Ganesh Das, 297; *Tarikh-e-Jhang Sayal*, 68; Sohan Lal, II, 5; Tulsi Ram, 44-5.

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chakia and Hari Singh Bhangi who commanded the strongest bands, settled themselves in the Rechna and Chaj Doabs in the midst of a hostile population. The Nishanwalas and Dallewalias guarded 'Guru ki Nagri' (Chak Guru or Amritsar), and were to serve as a reserve force for any emergency. These chiefs threw up a number of small forts at convenient centres where strong garrisons were placed to enforce their authority.[1]

This step secured for the Sikhs a strong economic position for the time being and created for the Sikh chiefs principalities, which they were soon to rule over as absolute masters. Thus, this step supplied them with the idea of raising themselves into territorial chieftains.

In November, 1756, Ahmad Shah Durrani entered India on his fourth campaign, and as usual threw the whole country into utter confusion and chaos and afforded the Sikhs another lease of five months to carry on their activities unrestrained.

The Mughal power reduced to zero during the fourth Durrani invasion, November, 1756—April, 1757

Ahmad Shah Durrani was this time invited to invade India by Mughlani Begam, Najib-ud-daulah and Emperor Alamgir II, all of whom promised him their full support.[2] The Durrani king started from Kandahar early in autumn and arrived at Peshawar in the beginning of November, 1756. He left Peshawar on 15th November, crossed the Indus on 26th and reached Lahore on 20th December, stayed in Lahore for twelve days exacting tributes from the local chiefs, and then crossed the Satluj on 10th January and advanced towards Delhi by rapid marches.

In the course of all his previous incursions the Durrani had

[1]Cf. Sohan Lal, II, 5.

[2]The Begam wrote: "Goods and cash worth crores of Rupees lie buried to my knowledge in the palace of my late father-in-law, besides heaps of gold and silver stored inside the ceilings. A perfect disagreement exists among the Emperor Alamgir II, his wazirs and nobles. If you invade India this time, the Indian Empire with all its riches of crores will fall into your hands without your incurring any expenditure." (Ali-ud-din, 114b).

Najib-ud-daulah wrote: "In this country I have gathered round myself 25,000 Afghans. I have prepared the other Afghans of Gangapar (Trans-Ganga) who number 40,000 to enter your service. You may come here without any suspicion. Imad-ul-Mulk has not the strength to oppose you. I am his greatest ally. As I have become obedient to you, there is none other left here (to help him)." (Nur-ud-din, 14b).

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experienced active opposition from the Panjab Viceroy, and the Delhi court also had made some efforts or at least had displayed some energy or anxiety in checking his progress. On this occasion the empire had been reduced to such a condition of utter rack and ruin that no one tried to impede his march and not a single Indian soldier came forward to oppose him till the invader found himself in the imperial capital where everybody lay at his mercy.

The events of this campaign are foreign to our subject, but it is necessary to show how matters stood at Delhi and what havoc Abdali created there.

Abdali entered Delhi on 28th January, 1757 and from that day his troops fell to plundering and committing all sorts of ravages.[1] The Durrani himself entered upon a system of torture and exaction, and even the greatest grandees of the court were subjected to the lowest humiliation. The houses of all high nobles were dug up, the ceilings broken and their women stripped of everything. Mughlani Begam rendered the Abdali the most meritorious service by telling him of what worth each noble was and what virgin beauties were in the Imperial harem.[2]

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Afterwards the whole city was divided into wards. Afghan troops were posted everywhere and a regular levy was charged from every house. Torture of all kinds was applied and a large number of men and women died under the operation while many took poison or drowned themselves. This state of things lasted in Delhi for about a month. These atrocities were not limited to Delhi city alone. Mathura was sacked afterwards where massacre, rape and arson were committed beyond limit. Next Brindaban was subjected to the same fate.

Nature came to the rescue of the helpless people where the Government of the country had utterly failed. The cholera epidemic broke out in Abdali's camp, carrying off about 150 soldiers daily. This made Ahmad Shah return home without delay, and with a heavy heart he had to call off his vanguard to go back. He arrived at Delhi on 31st March, took Hazrat Begam, a 16 year old daughter

For Emperor's invitation, cf. Francklin's *Shah Aulum*, 4-5.

[1] *S.P.D.*, XXI, 104.

"They dragged away peoples' wives and daughters with such cruelty, that numbers, overborne by the delicacy of their feelings, rather than fall into their abominable hands, made away with themselves." *Siyar*, III, 54.

[2] *Husain Shahi*, 37.

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of Muhammad Shah forcibly into wedding and dragged away 17 other ladies of the Imperial harem and 400 maid-servants in his train. A month before he had married his son Timur to the daughter of Emperor Alamgir II, and taking these virgin tributes he then formally annexed the province of Sarhind to his own kingdom and appointed Abdus Samad Khan Mohmandzai[1] of Hashtnagar its governor. The city of Delhi was sacked once more. Then laden with immense booty, he left Delhi on 2nd April, 1757. He bestowed the office of the Wazir on Imad-ul-Mulk, at the request of Mughlani Begam and appointed Najib-ud-daulah Mir Bakhshi of Hindustan and his own-plenipotentiary (*Mukhtar*) and as the real master of the Mughal Government.[2]

The Sikh activities of lawlessness, December, 1756—April, 1757

At all such times of foreign invasion the whole country is as a rule thrown into an entire convulsion and upheaval. The Government suspended its administration and law and order came to an end. "In all directions the zamindars raised their heads in rebellion and blocked the traffic on all the roads." Not to speak of the people of small consequence, even the noted chiefs took full advantage of the confusion of the times. "Najabat Khan of Kunjpura dressed his Afghans in scarlet caps and *vilayati Alkhaliqs* and (pretending to be Durranis) took to highway robbery."[3]

The Sikhs were not yet strong enough to hold themselves in their positions and save from the Durrani atrocities such people as had sought shelter under their suzerainty. Almost all the people all along the route had deserted their homes and had fled either to the

[1]Browne, II, 18, wrongly names him Ahmed Khan.

[2]"Abdali's own goods were loaded on 28,000 camels, elephants, mules, bullocks and carts, while 200 camel-loads of property were taken by Muhammad Shah's widows who accompanied him, and these too belonged to him; 80,000 horse and foot followed him, each man carrying away spoils. His cavalry returned on foot, loading their booty on their chargers. For securing transport, the Afghan King left no horse or camel in any one's house, not even a donkey." *Cf. S.P.D.*, II, 71; Sarkar, II, 125-30.

Delhi Chronicle, 135; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 152-62; Rajwade, VI, 395; Miskin, 131-7; Samin in *Indian Antiquary*, 1907, pp. 10-18, 43-51, 55-70; *Khazana-e-Amira* 52 (Contemporary); *Siyar*, III, 53 (useful). By far the fullest details of this campaign are given by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in his *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, Chapters XV-XVI, pp. 82-136.

[3]Samin in *Indian Antiquary*, 13; Miskin, 133.

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hills and jungles or to the deep ravines in the neighbourhood where the Afghans could not pursue them with immunity.[1] The Sikhs made the most of these disturbances and plundered those people who had not taken shelter with them under the Rakhi system. Sayyid Jamil-ud-din, when fleeing from Lahore to Delhi, was plundered by the Sikhs near Philaur. Nearly the whole treasure he was carrying with him was seized. The Jullundur Doab was lying unprotected as Adina Beg Khan had fled to the waterless tract of Hansi and Hissar. The Sikhs had the best opportunity to punish the people of the Doab who had often helped Adina Beg Khan against them. The whole Doab was given over to plunder and their enemies were mercilessly treated. Ahmad Shah, whilst on his march to Delhi, was preyed upon by them; the stragglers of the Afghan army were cut off and their baggage plundered. His son Timur was also robbed as is testified to by a Marathi despatch dated March, 1757, reproduced in Rajwade, Vol. I, p. 85. It runs: "At the end of March, 1757, when the front division of Abdali's army under Prince Timur was transporting the plundered wealth of Delhi to Lahore, Alha Singh, in concert with other Sikh robbers, had barred his path at Sanaur (between Ambala and Patiala) and robbed him of half his treasures, and again attacked and plundered him at Malerkot. So great had been the success of these brigands that rumour had magnified it into the Prince's captivity and even death at their hands." Ahmad Shah, on his way back to Afghanistan, was again attacked by the Sikhs between Delhi and the river Chenab several times and they easily succeeded in acquiring a part of the enormous booty he was carrying off.[2]

Ahmad Shah stayed in Lahore for some time, sent expeditions against the Sikhs, massacred a number of them, plundered their city of Amritsar, pulled down their sacred buildings and filled the tank with dirt and refuse.[3] The Sikhs left the neighbourhood of Lahore and Amritsar and took shelter in the Sandal Bar and the hills of Jammu where they could not be pursued easily. The Abdali was very much enraged at the depredations of the Sikhs and wanted to

[1]"From Lahore to Sarhind not a village was left tenanted; all men, high and low, having fled away in all directions." *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani* quoted in Sarkar II, 63-4; Gian Singh, 720.

[2]Ahmad Shah, 877; Malcolm, 93. Cf. Sarkar, II, 71-2; *S.P.D.*, XXVII, 148; Bakhtmal, 77.

[3]*Husain Shahi*, 41; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 9-10; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 132-3.

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chastise them thoroughly, but he had to withdraw to Afghanistan on account of the growing intensity of the hot weather and a rebellion which had broken out in his disjointed dominions in his absence. In order to drive out the Sikhs from their hill fastnesses and to secure regular help for the Lahore subahdar in his expeditions against the Sikhs, Ahmad Shah confirmed his alliance with Ranjit Dev of Jammu by the gift of the three Badshahi parganahs of Zafarwal, Sankatra and Aurangabad.[1]

The Durrani then took up the administration of the province into his own hands, and appointed his own son, Timur Shah, the subahdar of the Panjab with his commander-in-chief Jahan Khan as his deputy and guardian.[2] Ten thousand best Afghan troops of his special contingent were left in Lahore with Timur Shah, and he was allowed to enlist a separate army of India-born Turki, Irani and Afghan soldiers. Satisfied with these arrangements, he marched for Kandahar.

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[1] *Shamshir Khalsa*, 93; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 100; *Sialkot District Gazetteer*, p. 16.

[2] Miskin, 139.

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CHAPTER 7

The Sikhs and Jahan Khan, May, 1757—May, 1758

Introductory

In their conflict with the Mughals (1739-56), the Sikhs had opposed them with a certain measure of success and had risen from the low level of distress and desperation to the exalted position of power and privilege. They had established their protectorate over a large part of the province, and it was probable that they would have soon succeeded in setting themselves up as absolute masters of these lands. But another enemy had appeared already from the north-west, whose forces of overwhelming magnitude carried everything before them and thus threw back the progress of the Sikhs for about a decade. This was Ahmad Shah Durrani.

Their contest with the Durrani involved them in greater adversity. Time after time was Amritsar captured and their holy shrines pulled down and polluted. They were terribly persecuted and driven from pillar to post. But after each defeat the Sikhs rose with unabated vigour, heroically seizing on every opportunity which offered them support, and thus ultimately emerged triumphant from a struggle with the mightiest ruler of his age.

Ahmad Shah during his fourth invasion crushed the Mughal power of Delhi, seizing the province of Sarhind from the Empire and appointing his nominee Najib-ud-daulah in the capital to control all the important affairs of the Empire. His expedition (1759-61) saw a nearly entire destruction of the Maratha power in the north. His sixth campaign (1762) aimed at annihilating the rising Sikh power which stood between him and his possession of the Panjab. With this view he inflicted upon the Sikhs a crushing defeat at Kup in 1762, massacring about 20,000 of them.

But a sudden rise has a sudden fall too. These three expeditions had seen Ahmad Shah Abdali at the zenith of his power, while

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the following three years were to witness him declining to his nadir. In his seventh campaign (1764-65) he met with a tough opposition from his bearded enemies, and in his onward march towards Delhi he was so severely obstructed that he had to fight always on the defensive. During his eighth expedition (1766-67), he was constantly harassed by the Sikhs, so much so that he tried to win them over by favours and concessions, but utterly failed in it. In his last invasion (1769) he could not proceed farther than the Jehlam. By this time the Sikhs had securely established themselves as absolute masters of the major portion of the plains of the Panjab between the Indus and the Jamuna. To the course of this glorious achievement of the Sikhs we now turn.

Sikhs are disturbed in their quiet progress

In the last chapter we left the Sikhs as having established their right of protection over a large portion of territory on receiving the payment of a certain sum of money from each village. Thus each chief was busy in extending his protectorate over the country in his respective neighbourhood. The Sikhs were suspending their activities of freebooting as the neighbouring villages were coming under their protection voluntarily. In this rather peaceful avocation they were soon disturbed by the Afghan Government of Lahore.

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Jahan Khan's fight with the Sikhs, c. November 11, 1757

Ahmad Shah Durrani, though very much annoyed with the Sikhs could not personally subdue them, as he was in a hurry to go back to his own country. He left strict injunctions with his experienced general Jahan Khan to suppress the Sikhs for all the excesses which they had committed. Jahan Khan soon set himself to this task, but the veteran Afghan general proved an utter failure in this business on account of his rash temper and unwise statesmanship. In order to assure himself of a plentiful supply of money in the form of land-revenue and trade-taxes, Jahan Khan tried to establish peace and order in the country. He achieved a fair measure of success in this undertaking in the beginning. "Justice was done in the capital and in the districts, and the roads became safe for traffic once more."[1] The Sikhs were pursued everywhere and were consequently forced to seek shelter partly in the Himalayan tracts and partly in the desert of Malwa.

[1]Sarkar, II, 67.

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One of the Sikh chiefs who had retired to Malwa was Dip Singh. Stopping his depredations, he stayed at Damdama Sahib and busied himself in making a copy of the *Granth*, the holy book of the Sikhs. He was inspired by the writings of the Gurus and felt enraged at the desecration of their sacred temple and tank at Amritsar by Ahmad Shah Abdali. He decided to celebrate the Diwali festival at Amritsar and to repair the holy buildings. The execution of such a plan was full of danger, but Dip Singh was firm. A number of his misl responded to his call and resolved to illuminate the Guru's temple and the tank at the risk of their lives. Leaving his nephew Sada Singh in charge of the shrine, Dip Singh raised a band of followers from villages of Jaga, Bahman, Nahanawala, Banjhoke, Guruchautra, Phul, Mehraj, Daraj, Bhachhu, Govindpura, Kot and Lakhi Jungle, numbering in all about 1,000. Then they marched towards Amritsar, and on their way halted at Taran Taran, another sacred place of the Sikhs. Here they tied festal ribbons round their wrists and sprinkled saffron on their turbans in order to prepare themselves for a sacrifice.[1] Soon after they arrived at Amritsar, where they performed religious rites and celebrated the holy festival as best as they could. Soon after a fight with Jahan Khan took place which Miskin, the eyewitness, thus describes:

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"One day a paper of news from an intelligencer informed Jahan Khan that a large body of Sikhs had assembled at Chak Guru for a (religious) bath and were causing tumult and violence. The viceroy's troops under Haji Atai Khan were out in the neighbourhood subduing the country, settling matters, and chastising them (the Sikhs). The Wazir wrote a letter to Sardar Haji Atai Khan informing him about the disturbances. He asked him to reach the Chak by a sudden march with all his troops on a certain day, promising that he also would arrive there at the appointed time in order to send this lost sect to the dwelling place of destruction. He also issued a proclamation in the city of Lahore after the manner of *Vilayat* that everybody whether a servant of the State or otherwise, possessing a horse, must follow him to the battlefield. Accordingly, the Begam Sahiba also was asked to send all her servants under Tahmas Khan (Miskin). The Begam at once sent for all her attendants, numbering 25 and ordered them (to march) in the company of

[1]Sarup Lal's *Tarikh-e-Sikhan*, 71-2; *Dastur-ul-Amal Sikhan*, 130-32; *Raj Khalsa*, 40-1.

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Miskin. Qasim Khan (the hero of Patti) also joined them. Then they joined the Wazir's troops, who were about 2,000 in number. By nightfall they arrived at Sarai Khankhanan, which was 20 kms away from Lahore. The next day they reached a place, 8 kms on this side of the Chak (village Golerwal, 8 kms from Amritsar). They were surprised to find that Haji Atai Khan had delayed his march in spite of strict instructions.

"The Sikhs got this intelligence and attacked us on all the four sides. The battle began and both the parties got busy in showering fire on each other. The Sikhs closely besieged us and from every side kept the fighting hot and distressed us so much that many of our men turned to flee in desperation. The Wazir also with agility and daring tried to stop them. At that time this Miskin with two mounted troopers was with him. But the Sikhs had left no path for the fleeing soldiers to escape by. At last they returned to the army disappointed and dejected. Jahan Khan then took out his sword and wounded some of his own men who had fled saying, 'Why did you flee?' In short, we all gathered together and got busy in fighting again. The matter came to such a pass that none felt life in him. But this Miskin displayed so much courage that nobody would believe him if he were to describe it. At this stage Haji Atai Khan arrived with a triumphant army; and the ill-natured Sikhs who were feeling proud of their courage and bravery were defeated by the relentless swords and the ruthless guns. The wretched (Sikhs), could not face opposition and took to flight. The victorious army gave them a close pursuit as far as Chak Guru. It was a screened place (the shrine of their Holy Book), and at its door we saw five Sikh infantry men (standing on guard). The heroes of our army rushed at and killed them. At this place Mir Ne'mat-ullah Khan, one of the Lahore grandees, lost his life in the struggle. Then our triumphant army encamped there."[1]

Dip Singh and his four devoted *jathadars*, besides many others, lost their lives in this battle. A monument was raised to the memory of Baba Dip Singh at Ramsar (near the site of Ram Rauni fort), that of Ram Singh *jathadar* in the *Katra* (street) of the Ramgarhias, and of Sajjan Singh, Bahadur Singh, Agarh Singh and Hira Singh at Guru-ka-Bagh; while a Shahid Ganj (abode of martyrs) commemorates the martyrdom of Kuar Singh, Mana Singh, Sant

[1]Miskin, 162-5.

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Singh,[1] etc.

As Baba Dip Singh and his followers had given up their lives while performing a religious duty without causing any harm to anybody, they were all given the title of *Shahids* (martyrs) by their co-religionists. After Dip Singh, the leadership of his misl passed on to another leader of note named Karam Singh, who retained the title of *Shahid* for himself as well as for his misl.

After his victory Jahan Khan, from religious zeal, destroyed and polluted all the places of worship of the Sikhs at Amritsar and filled up the sacred tank.[2]

Sodhi Wadbhag Singh of Kartarpur belaboured, December, 1757

Jahan Khan's wrath soon found another victim in a Sikh priest named Sodhi Wadbhag Singh of Kartarpur, who being absorbed in religious devotion led a peaceful life and had nothing to do with the depredations of the other Sikhs. We reproduce below the contemporary account of Miskin[3]. "Two Afghan troopers were coming from Sarhind (to Lahore) and by chance were killed in the territory of the fort of (Kartarpur). On learning this news Jahan Khan at once despatched some sagawals after the manner of *Vilayat*, to compel the headman of the place (to produce the culprits). The said *chaudhari* (Sodhi Wadbhag Singh, in charge of Gurdwara Tham Sahib) was the famous chief of the territory; nay, he was a well known and respectable religious guide of the Sikhs and was the proprietor (of land) worth lakhs of revenue. The men following the Afghan practice, beat him so hard that he was brought to death's door and saved his life only by escaping in the night to some unknown village (Bahiri in Hoshiarpur District).[4] The bailiffs then returned disappointed without gaining anything. From that moment the peace and orderly rule which had been recently established in

[1]*Sikh Martyrs*, 196-9; *Punjab Notes and Queries*, II, September, 1885, 208-9.

[2]Browne, II, 19; Malcolm, 94.

[3]Miskin, 165. *Sazawal*—"A collector of revenue; an officer especially appointed to take charge of and collect the revenue of an estate from the management of which the owner or farmer has been removed, a land streward, bailiff, an agent appointed by a landowner or a lessor to enforce payment of rent due from tenants or lease-holders." (*C.P.C.* II, 448).

[4]This place is now called Derah Guru Wadbhag Singh, 40 kms from Hoshiarpur in the hills where a great fair is held every year in March on the days of Holi and Hola. The place is famous for removing the effects of witchcraft and ghosts, etc.

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the country disappeared and the Sikhs rose in rebellion on all sides."

This was not all. The bailiffs at the advice and help of Nasir Ali of Jullundur pulled down the Sikh temple,[1] polluted it by slaughtering cows and forcibly converted all the Hindu and Sikh women of the place to Islam and sacked the neighbourhood thoroughly.

Defeat of the Afghans by Adina Beg and the Sikhs in concert, c. December, 1757

The vigorous fanatical outrages committed by Jahan Khan on the Sikhs were keenly resented by them. They provoked the whole race to such a degree that they resolved to increase their power as quickly as possible in order to seize the prize which was being snatched away from them by the usurping Durranis. Consequently all of them retired to the Shiwalik hills in the north of Hoshiarpur, where they concerted a plan of action in which they were soon joined by the famous Adina Beg Khan.

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It has already been stated that during the Durrani invasion Adina Beg Khan, the Governor of the Jullundur Doab, had fled away to

[1]The village and Gurdwara were both founded by Guru Arjun in 1598. The original volume of the *Adi Granth* in the handwriting of Bhai Gurdas, venerated by all the Sikhs as the most precious of their religious relics, was deposited here in 1664 AD. Pilgrims flock to this place all the year round. Maharajah Ranjit Singh made a grant of a lakh and a quarter of rupees in 1833 towards the building of the temple and he set apart the revenues of village Fatahpur for the maintenance of the institution. Sadhu Singh, the priest, took this *Granth Sahib* to Lahore in 1830 at the request of Ranjit Singh and received the highest honours as its guardian. A daily offering of Rs. 86 was made and special doles of Rs. 600 were received on the first and last day of the month; while once a year a valuable shawl and a horse were presented in the Maharajah's name. This sacred volume was also taken to Patiala in 1860 at the desire of Maharajah Narendar Singh. He fixed a daily allowance of Rs. 51 for its guardians and made them stay with him for three whole years, vainly trying to acquire it. This *Granth* now rests at Kartarpur in the Gurdwara Thamji. The book is shown to the public every Sunday in the Shishmahal, and the *Charhawa* or voluntary offerings made before it form an important item in the income of the Gurdwara. In 1859, Sadhu Singh prepared a very handsome copy of the original *Granth Sahib* for transmission to Queen Victoria, who most graciously accepted the gift; and Her Majesty's acknowledgements were conveyed to the priest in a letter from the Secretary of State. (Griffin's *Chief and Families of Note*; 1890, pp. 295-7); Ratan Singh, 413; Gian Singh, 722; Miskin, 145, 165; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 100; *Siyar*, III, 63; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 120a.

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the desert of Hansi and Hissar. After some time he escaped to the Shiwalik hills and sought shelter in a hill called Khali Balwan or Garli 40 kms and Bharwain 35 kms north of Hoshiarpur. After taking charge of the Panjab, Jahan Khan called upon Adina Beg to take up the administration of the Jullundur Doab and to present himself at Lahore.

Adina Beg rightly had suspicions against Jahan Khan. The veteran chief evaded prompt compliance. Jahan Khan pillaged the Jullundur Doab and threatened Adina Beg with pursuit and punishment. The wary Adina Beg then showed willingness to undertake the administration of the Doab provided he was exempted from attending the court. Jahan Khan agreed and issued to him a patent and a *khilat* for an annual subsidy of 36 lakhs of rupees.

After some time Jahan Khan demanded Adina's immediate presence in Lahore. Adina Beg distrusted the Afghan general and flatly refused to come. Jahan Khan was annoyed and sent a strong detachment of his troops under Murad Khan to seize Adina. Sadiq Beg Khan, the deputy Governor of Sarhind, and Khwajah Mirza Khan with a strong army including Raja Bhup Singh, the famous chief of the hill territories at the head of his own 5,000 experienced and valorous cavaliers, joined him.

Adina Beg, who knew all about this formidable army, transferred his camp to the foot of the hills where he could give a slip to the enemy in the case of defeat. He also won over Sodhi Wadbhag Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia by the payment of a heavy tribute, besides granting them many concessions of loot. Thus the whole Dal Khalsa got ready to fight on his side.[1]

Murad Khan crossed the Beas and arrayed his forces against Adina Beg Khan. In the engagement that followed, the Afghans were severely defeated and all their stores and baggage fell into the hands of Adina. The Sikhs then "ravaged all the districts of the Doab" and collected an immense booty. Ghulam Ali, Ratan Singh and Gian Singh state that the Sikhs under the explicit injunctions of Sodhi Wadbhag Singh burnt the city of Jullundur, the home of Nasir Ali, who was responsible for the atrocities committed at Kartarpur, massacred men and children, reduced the women to slavery, defiled the mosques with pigs' blood and insulted the dead

[1]Ghulam Ali, I, 55-6; *Siyar*, III, 64. Cf. Ahmad Shah, 871-2; Ganesh Das, 156; Sultan Muhammad Khan Durrani, *Tarikh-e-Sultani*, Persian printed, 1881, Bombay, 133.

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body of Nasir Ali, by digging it out of the grave and thrusting pigs' flesh into his mouth.[1] Adina Beg Khan from fear of Jahan Khan took refuge in the impenetrable retreats of Nalagarh hills, and Jahan Khan appointed Sarfaraz Khan to the *faujdari* of the Jullundur Doab.

The Sikhs baffle the Afghans, c. January—February, 1758

The impolitic lack of statesmanship in Jahan Khan soon brought ruin on the Afghan kingdom in India, and great disorder and confusion arose everywhere. The Sikhs contributed the most in bringing about this state. A Marathi despatch says:—"The Sikhs, gathering together by our advice, began to upset Abdali's rule; from some places they expelled his outposts. They defeated Sa'adat Khan Afridi, plundered all the Jullundur Doab,[2] and forced him to flee to the hills. By the order of the *subahdar*, Khwajah Abed Khan came from Lahore with 20,000 horse and foot to fight the Sikhs. In the end he was defeated, many of his captains were slain, all of his camp and baggage were plundered and all the artillery left behind by Abdali was captured." This state of affairs is also testified to by Miskin, then present in Lahore. Remarking about the helplessness of the Afghans and the boldness of the Sikhs, he says:—"After this every force in whatever direction it was sent, came back defeated and vanquished. Even the environs of Lahore were not safe. Every night thousands of Sikhs used to fall upon the city and plunder the suburbs lying outside the walls of Lahore; but no force was sent out to repel them and the city gates were closed one hour after nightfall. It brought extreme disgrace to the Government and utter lawlessness prevailed."[3]

The Sikhs soon found another opportunity of wrecking full ven-

[1]Ghulam Ali, I, 56; Ratan Singh, 420-21; Gian Singh, 727-28. Cf. *Tarikh-e-Ibrahim Khan*, in Elliot, VIII, 266; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 100; *Siyar*, III, 64; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 102a; *Irshad-ul-Mustaqim*, 295a and 317a; *Imperial Gazetteer*, 1908, Punjab, I, 421.

[2]Miskin, 166; *Siyar*, III, 64.

[3]*S.P D.*, II, 83, dated 17-11-1757, but bears the note of interrogation which shows that the Editor is not certain about this date. I have put these events in January, 1758. Cf. Sarkar, II, 69-70.

Malcolm in *Sketch* on p. 94 also remarks to the same effect when he writes: "They all assembled at Lahore and not only attempted to cut off the communication between the fort and country, but collected and divided the revenues of the towns and villages around it." Miskin, 166.

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geance upon the Afghans and gratified their passion for revenge by massacring large numbers of them and finally seeing them expelled from the Panjab. This they did by becoming an ally of the Marathas, the story of whose deeds in the Panjab is given below.

The Maratha invasion of the Panjab

Adina Beg, the *ex-faujdar* of the Jullundur Doab, was keenly feeling the loss of his office. He was also convinced that the Durrani wrath was bound to fall upon him sooner or later. So he sent repeated requests to Raghunath Rao, then in Delhi, to extend the Maratha dominions as far as the Indus, pointing out the rich harvest of spoil within his easy reach and also promising, on his own part, to pay him one lakh of rupees for every day of marching and Rs. 50,000 for halting.[1]

The Marathas readily embraced such an occasion of temptation and promise. They made an agreement with Emperor Alamgir II and his Prime Minister Imad-ul-mulk to recover the lost province of the Mughal Empire from the occupation of Ahmad Shah Abdali. They were to pay into the imperial treasury half of the revenues of the Panjab, and were to be fully responsible for its administration and security.[2] One division of their troops under Malhar Rao crossed the Jamuna by the end of December and laid siege to the Afghan fort of Kunjpura. Abdus, Samad Khan, the governor of Sarhind, was busy in fighting Alah Singh of Patiala, had imposed a fine on him and besieged his fort of Sunam (70 kms of Patiala). On hearing of the close approach of the Marathas, he was very much perturbed, settled terms with Alha Singh at once and hurried to Sarhind on the 12th January, 1758. He started repairs of the fort, and dug trenches round the city. Malhar Rao, however, recrossed the Jamuna on exacting a tribute of five lakhs and thus gave relief to Abdus Samad Khan.[3]

[1]Miskin, 167-8; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 100; *Chahar Gulzar Shujai*, 463b; *Husain Shahi*, 43; *Siyar*, III, 64; *Ghulam Ali*, I, 56; *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 55b.

[2]*S.P.D.*, XXVII, 205.

[3]Malhar's women came to Kurukshetra for a religious bath on the 9th January. They were attacked at Shahabad by a contingent of Abdus Samad Khan. The Maratha guard fought well, slew many Afghans and seized their horses. (Rajwade, I, 85; Sarkar, II, 72)

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The fall of Sarhind, March, 1758

The Maratha invasion of the Panjab began about the end of February. Raghunath Rao, at the head of his vast forces was at Mughal-ki-Sarai near Ambala on the 5th March, at Rajpura on the 6th, at Aluenki Sarai Banjara on the 7th and in the neighbourhood of Sarhind on the 8th March 1758.[1] The account of the siege of Sarhind, in the words of a contemporary historian of Delhi, is reproduced here. "The Maratha troops beyond number from this side, and Adina Beg Khan collecting an army of the Sikhs, the worshippers of Nanak who practise highway robbery in the province of the Panjab, from the other side of the Satluj, came to Sarhind. Abdus Samad Khan, Abdali's governor, finding himself unable to fight shut himself up in the fort. The Maratha army and Adina Beg Khan laid siege to the place. After a few days of firing Abdus Samad Khan and Jangbaz Khan fled away. The Marathas overtook and imprisoned them. As the Marathas and the Sikhs knew nothing but plundering, they so thoroughly looted the inhabitants of Sarhind, high and low, that none, either male or female, had a cloth on his or her person left. They pulled down the houses and carried off the timber. They dug up floors (in search of buried hoards) and seized whatever they could lay their hands on."[2]

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The news of the Maratha siege of Sarhind had reached Jahan Khan. He immediately came out of Lahore at the head of 2,000 troops and wasted 40 days in scouting for intelligence in the Jullundur Doab, but did not venture to face the formidable enemy. On hearing that the Marathas had crossed the Satluj and were fast approaching Lahore, he returned to the capital and finding himself unable to stem this torrent of invasion decided on retiring precipitately to Afghanistan.

Expulsion of the Afghans from the Panjab, April, 1758

Miskin, who was an eye-witness of the Lahore events, gives an interesting pen-picture of the expulsion of the Afghans from the Panjab. He says that Jahan Khan decided on vacating Lahore (c. 9th April). He set up his camp at Shahdara across the Ravi and conveyed there Timur's mother and his own women and relations first of all. The other Durrani chiefs and all the troops carried their baggage and property in cart-loads by repeated trips day and night.

[1] *Kaghzat-e-Bhagwant Rae* in Karam Singh, 295-7.
[2] *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 311; *S.P.D.*, XXVII, 220.

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In the meantime the news was received that the invaders had crossed the Beas and their advanced guard under Adina Beg Khan and Manaji Paygude lay encamped 20 kms from Lahore. That very day at noon Timur Shah crossed the river, followed by his Wazir. Their troops set fire to the goods which they could not carry away. The eunuchs then mounted the women of Timur and Jahan in litters on camels and on horses, and the whole Afghan camp moved onward towards Kabul, while Miskin quietly brought Mughlani Begam and her maiden daughter in a covered bullock cart to Lahore and admitted them into their residential quarters. On this day the masterless city was in a state of utter confusion and terror, and robbers and marauders of the town and its neighbourhood were busy in plundering defenceless people of their money and property. Miskin, however, did a little bit in checking the lawlessness prevailing in the city by shutting all the gates at nightfall and patrolling the streets all night.[1]

At about nine o'clock, the following morning, 10th April, 500 Maratha cavaliers and 100 of Khwajah Mirza's Mughalia troops under 'Ashur Ali Khan, whom Miskin knew well, arrived at Delhi Gate of Lahore and showed him written orders from their chiefs. Miskin at once opened the gate and entrusted the city to their care. Khwaja Mirza Khan at the head of 1,000 Mughals and 10,000 Marathas came the next day. The same morning Timur had retired from Shahdara, leaving several thousand soldiers in the rear in charge of Mir Hazar Khan. Khwajah Mirza Khan crossed the Ravi and fell upon Mir Hazar Khan who fled away after a little fighting. They were overtaken and besieged on all sides by the Marathas and after being defeated their leader was captured. At this news Timur Shah and Jahan Khan grew alarmed and quickened their speed.

Jahan Khan halted at Sarai Kachi, 56 kms north-west of Lahore, but was overtaken by Khwajah Mirza and numerous Maratha and Sikh troops who had joined him on the way. They lacked siege material, and Jahan Khan taking advantage of this fact succeeded in slipping out of the Sarai under cover of darkness (4th day of the new moon). They soon arrived at the Chenab below Wazirabad. Timur and Jahan Khan with their Durrani soldiers had hardly crossed the deep, wide, extremely cold and swiftly running river,

[1]Miskin, 171-8. Cf. *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 312.

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when the Marathas and the Sikhs came upon the scene. At this time all the Uzbak, Qizilbash and Afghan soldiers with Timur's entire camp and baggage were on the eastern side of the river and all of them fell an easy prey to the numerous hordes of the Marathas and Sikhs.[1]

The victors then entered their encampment and after slaying most of Timur's soldiers, plundered it, and a huge lot of heavy baggage and property that Timur had accumulated during his administration of this region fell into their hands, and it was brought to Lahore by 20,000 Marathas and 10,000 Sikhs in several trips. Those Afghans who had been left alive were driven in bonds by the Sikhs to Amritsar, where they were compelled under blows and whips to clean out all the rubbish with which Ahmad Shah and Jahan Khan had filled their tank. Khwajah Mirza also enlisted many of the captives in his army.[2]

The Marathas and Adina Beg's troops pursued the Afghans as far as the Indus, and left Datta Patil at Attock with a strong force to prevent the Afghans from crossing the river into India. Subsequently the Marathas seem to have crossed the Indus and stationed themselves at least for a time at Peshawar.[3]

Raghunath and Adina Beg had reached Lahore on 11th April. Adina Beg Khan constructed in the Shalimar Garden, at the cost of one lakh rupees, a magnificent platform on which Raghunath Rao was seated and given a public reception. The fountains of the garden were made to play with rose-water and the whole city was illuminated.[4]

Raghunath was not willing to stay in the Panjab and keep it under his personal charge for several reasons. The Panjab was far away from the home of the Marathas and the rough and slow means of communication of those days made it difficult for them to pay frequent visits to their home. It was also subject to extreme changes of climate, the burning summer and the shivering winter. The rivers were not fordable from May to Oct. as they swelled

[1] *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 312; Miskin, 178-9.

[2] *J.P.D.*, XXVII, 2[illegible]; Miskin, 179; *Tarikh-e-Ibrahim Khan* in Elliot, VIII, 267; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 134; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 100-101; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 102a-b; *Husain Shahi*, 45; *Chahar Gulzar Shujai*, 463b; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 10; Ahmad Shah, 873; Shah Yusaf, 59b-60a. Cf. Bakhtmal, 81; *Tarikh-e-Sultani*, 134.

[3] Cf. Author's *Later Mughal History of the Panjab*, 175-6.

[4] Ud-din, 111a.

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due to snow melting on the Himalayas and rains. They were also placed in the midst of a hostile population of Northern India which did not look upon the Marathas in a friendly way and called them *Ghanim, i.e.* plunderers. Being the frontier province, it was also exposed to foreign attacks, the brunt of which was to be borne by them if they kept it under their control. To crown all, they were exasperated by the Sikh disturbances and thus they were not sure of a steady income. In view of all these circumstances they decided to place it in charge of Adina Beg Khan, who was an experienced and seasoned administrator and could successfully handle the Sikhs. They therefore conferred the title of Nawab on Adina Beg Khan and leased out the province to him for 75 lakhs of rupees a year. Then the Marathas returned towards Delhi, arriving at Thanesar on the 5th June where they had a religious bath on Somawati Amawash.[1]

Raghunath Rao possessed no statesmanship at all. While leaving the Panjab he should have realized that the Sikhs were a powerful and warlike community. He should have formed some sort of an alliance with them for the purpose of retaining possession of the Panjab. A compact with Adina Beg Khan alone was not sufficient. The Sikhs were at that time a well-knit body into Dal Khalsa under the supreme command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. No person in authority then attached any importance to them. A friendly hand by the Marathas towards them would have given them the status of a recognised power, and they would have readily agreed to be comrades of the Marathas in expelling the Afghans from the Indian soil. But unfortunately the Maratha leaders thought that they alone were strong enough to become the masters of the whole of India. That is why they gave little consideration to Rajput princes of Rajasthan, Jat Rajas of Bharatpur and Sikh Sardars of Panjab. Had the Marathas leagued themselves on an equal footing with these elements in Indian society, there would have been no third battle of Panipat in 1761, and no Ghallughara in 1762.

Adina Beg did not like to live in Lahore, the old capital. He was desirous of settling at Batala, a famous town to the north of

[1] *Delhi Chronicle*, 156; *S.P.D.*, XXVII, 218; Nur-ud-din, 21b; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 101; *Siyar*, III, 64; *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 56a; Khushwaqt Rae, 91; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 10; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 134; *Irshad-ul- Mustaqim*, 295b; Hugel, 265-6.

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Amritsar, where he fixed his headquarters. He appointed Khwajah Mirza Khan, now his son-in-law, to the government of Lahore with Khwajah Said Khan, the brother of the former as his deputy; while his old ally Sadiq Beg Khan was given charge of the administration of Sarhind. Khwajah Mirza did not like the presence of Mughlani Begam in Lahore and requested Adina Beg Khan to send her away. Adina Beg took her with him to Batala.[1]

Myth of Sikh occupation of Lahore in 1758

Most of the writers on Sikh history have stated that the Sikhs alone expelled Timur Shah and Jahan Khan from Lahore, occupied the provincial capital declared their sovereignty, and their leader Jassa Singh struck coins in his own name.[2]

Browne is the earliest writer who has mentioned this in his book. He based his account on the authority of two Panjabis whose dates are admitted as 'extremely defective' even by Browne himself.

Browne compiled his *India Tracts* nearly thirty years after this date and we cannot say whether Browne's Panjabi friends were eyewitnesses of this event as described by them. Browne writes: "Having met with two Hindus of considerable knowledge, who were natives of Lahore, where they had resided the greater part of their lives, and who had in their possession, accounts of the rise and progress of the Sikhs, written in the Naggory (or common Hindu) character, I persuaded them to let me have a translation of one of them in the Persian language, abridging it as much as they could do, without injuring essential purpose of information. After all, I found it extremely defective in a regular continuation of dates, and therefore not deserving the name of a history."[3]

Hence we can safely reject their authority in view of the more tangible evidence of the eye-witness Miskin, and the Marathas. The rest of the authorities are much later and do not claim to have

[1]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 360; Miskin, 179-80. From this point we lose Miskin's narrative of the Lahore affairs, the primary source of our information. Miskin stayed in the Panjab for four years more, living at Batala, Jammu, Delhi, Sialkot and Sarhind and supplies us with only fragmentary account of the Sikh deeds.

[2]Cf. Browne, II, 19; Malcolm, 94-5; Bakhtmal, 82; Khushwaqt Rae, 104; Elphinstone's *Kabul*, II, 289; Cunningham, 105; Latif's *Panjab*, 231; Gordon, 61; Narang, 148. Ratan Singh in his *Panth Prakash*, p. 424, states that Lahore was taken by the joint forces of Sikhs and Marathas.

[3]Browne, II, Introduction, III-IV

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based their statement on contemporary evidence. There is, however, no denying the fact that the Sikhs did capture Lahore and their chief leader Jassa Singh Ahluwalia did strike the coin. But all this took place about three years later and not in 1758, as we shall see later on.

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CHAPTER 8

Origin of Sikh Chiefdoms, June, 1758—October, 1759

Adina Beg Khan fights the Sikhs, June-September, 1758

After the withdrawal of the Afghans, Adina Beg Khan found fortune smiling upon him. The Delhi Government was too weak and distracted to challenge his supremacy, while the northern danger from the Durrani was removed by having brought the southerners into the Panjab. The main consideration for him was the collection of 75 lakhs of rupees which he had to pay to the Marathas, and this huge sum could not be collected till there was peace in the country and the peasants and the merchants could follow their peaceful avocations without any molestation. This could not be expected until the unbridled ambition of the Sikhs was checked. He, therefore, advised the Sikhs to bring their lawless activities to an end. But this was not going to be.

Adina Beg could not remain silent. He was a lover of discipline, a man of action, firm in mind and tenacious of purpose. Being born and bred in this province, Adina knew perfectly well when and how to strike at them. He had an army of 10,000 horse and foot. To strengthen himself against the Sikhs he enlisted a large number of additional troops and called upon the noted zamindars and chiefs in every part of the province to join him in removing the Sikh menace and restoring peace and order in the country. Consequently, the Gakhar, the Janjua and the Gheba zamindars of the Sind Sagar Doab; Chaudhari Rahmat Khan Waraech in the Chaj Doab; Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu, Chaudhari Pir Muhammad Chatha, Izzat Bakhsh Bhatti and other zamindars in the Rechna Doab; Raja Ghamand Chand, Nidhan Singh Randhawa, Mirza Muhammad Anwar of Qadian, the Afghans of Kasur in the Bari Doab; the Afghans of Jullundur and Alawalpur, Rai Ibrahim of Kapurthala, the Rais of Bankala, Dasuha, Khardunbala and Phagwara, and the

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Rajputs of Rahon in the Jullundur Doab were persuaded to join him in his war against the Sikhs.[1]

The above-mentioned zamindars supported by Adina's troops often fought with the Sikhs, who felt dismayed at these activities of their old friend and new foe. A strong body of them in order to overawe Adina Beg appeared in the neighbourhood of Adinanagar, a new township, 130 kms north of Lahore founded by him and called after his name. Adina Beg despatched Diwan Hira Mal and Guru 'Aqil Das of Jandiala against them. The battle, which was fiercely contested on both sides, took place near Qadian. The Diwan was slain and his troops dispersed, while his entire baggage fell into the hands of the Sikhs. Adina Beg was grieved at this and determined to take stringent measures against them.[2]

He at once issued strict orders to the lambardars, zamindars and other chiefs to join his forces and made them take an oath that they would attack the Sikhs and drive them away; and that wherever a Sikh was found, he was to be immediately put to death or captured. He also knew that the best hiding-places of the Sikhs were the palās jungles in the Majha, and therefore he aimed at destroying them. That Adina Beg Khan succeeded well in this undertaking is proved by the testimony of Ahmad Shah of Batala, whom we quote below:

"All the Panjab zamindars unwillingly submitted to him and started devising plans for rooting out the Sikhs. Of all the zamindars of the Panjab the Randhawas showed the greatest readiness in destroying the Sikhs. Adina Beg ordered that in no district and parganah the Sikhs should be allowed to live. They should either be captured or killed. Mir Aziz Bakhshi was one of his most trusted nobles. Adina appointed him to this duty at the head of several thousand horse. He also entrusted to him 1,000[3] carpenters with steel hatchets and axes for the purpose of cutting down and clearing the jungles and forests where the Sikhs used to seek shelter, so that no hiding place might exist for the people of this sect. The Sikhs were very much perturbed and relaxed their activities. Some fled away and hid themselves; but a body of them, bolder than the rest, showed the greatest gallantry and courage in going to Amritsar,

[1]Miskin, 167; Ahmad Shah, 882-3; Ali-ud-din, 118b-119a.

[2]Ali-ud-din, 119a. (Strangely enough the author says that both the Jassa Singhs fought on the side of Adina Beg Khan which seems apparently improbable).

[3]4,000 carpenters according to M'Gregor, 1, 132.

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State matters, while the other Maratha chiefs marched for the Panjab. Sayyid Jamil-ud-din had proceeded as far as Sonepat (50 kms from Delhi) and seeing the Marathas bound for Lahore hurriedly beat a retreat to the capital.[1]

In Lahore Khwajah Mirza Khan was busy settling the government affairs, but says the contemporary historian of Delhi "the worshippers of Nanak (Sikhs) were such rebels and robbers that the governor could not cope with them. The Maratha contingents reached Lahore and its suburbs. Beyond the river Chenab some Afghans and Gakhars in concert plundered the parganah of Gujrat and crossed over the Chenab to this side. Khwajah Mirza Khan took a band of the worshippers of Nanak (Sikhs), marched from Lahore and arrived on this side of the river. He fought and defeated them with the result that the Afghans fled away to the other side of the river. Mirza Khan crossed the river and took up an entrenched position. The Afghans and Gakhars assembled this time in large numbers and inflicted a defeat upon Khwajah Mirza Khan. On hearing that the Marathas had reached Lahore, the Afghans refrained from coming over to this side of the river (December, 1758)."[2]

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Khwajah Mirza Khan's position with regard to his own Mughalia troops was also not secure, as is vividly described in Miskin's pages. "Those Qizilbash chiefs whom he had seized from Timur Shah's army united with the Marathas. Their leading chiefs were Mirza Ahmad Khan and Salih Khan. The former cleverly managed to become the *Subahdar* of Lahore and the latter that of Multan. They adopted a thousand and one frauds and tricks, paid some (money) to the Marathas in order to win them over and promised more, and placed Nawab Khwajah Mirza Khan in confinement. They then sent their troops cleverly into the city of Lahore to seize it and also imprisoned Khwajah Said Khan, the brother of the above mentioned Mirza." The Peshwa despatched his capable general Dattaji Sindhia with a strong force to the Panjab to bring things to a normal state. Dattaji reached the bank of the Satluj early in April and lay encamped at Machhiwara for about three weeks. Adina Beg's son paid him a visit at this place, rendered submission and paid him some of the arrears of tribute due from his father. Dattaji appointed Sabaji Sindhia to take over the charge

[1] *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 359-60.

[2] ibid, 369.

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of Lahore but himself stayed there.[1] It seems he did not venture to advance farther from fear of the Sikhs, as is clear from the account of the Delhi historian: "On finding that in Lahore and around it the Sikhs were predominant and commanded a vast force, making the conquest of the Panjab difficult, Dattaji turned back towards Delhi."[2]

Sabaji succeeded in maintaining peace and order in the country for sometime. The vast Maratha armies, lying near Delhi at the beck and call of the Maratha Governor of Lahore, made the *ratsān* and zamindars of the Panjab obey him. With the help of the Sikhs, he also succeeded in beating back Jahan Khan who had led an expedition from Peshawar across the Indus. The Afghan general suffered heavily He lost his son and a large number of troops, himself receiving several wounds.[3]

In the following October began a mass movement of the Afghan troops into India for a fresh invasion. Their advance-guard under Jahan Khan, the Commander-in-Chief, crossed the Indus. At this time Dattaji Sindhia was too busy in the siege of Sukkartal to pay any attention and spare any troops for the Panjab. Sabaji's Maratha troops lay scattered all over the province as far as Multan. "Finding himself incapable of fighting with Jahan Khan he returned from the bank of the river (Ravi) and came to Batala. Jahan Khan, quite unopposed, arrived at Wazirabad and dispersed his troops on all sides (to raid). Lahore was without a ruler. Jahan Khan despatched 3 or 4 men to Surat Singh Khatri of Lahore with a letter to strike coins and read the *khutba* in the name of Timur Shah, the son of Ahmad Shah Durrani, and issued a proclamation warning all people not to oppress one another. Sabaji, finding himself unsafe at Batala, came to Jullundur. These events caused a consternation and fright in Sarhind." Adina Beg Khan's widow and son and Sadiq Beg Khan, the Maratha Governor of Sarhind, all fled away to Delhi. One Maratha general and several soldiers lingering in the vicinity of Lahore were cut to pieces by the Durrani vanguard. A Maratha force coming from Multan was also plundered by the people.[4]

[1] Miskin, 194; *S.P.D.*, II, 100; Sarkar, II, 78.

[2] *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 205b; Sarkar, II, 79.

[3] *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 367; *Delhi Chronicle*, 165 (the news was received in Delhi on the 19th September); Rajwade, VI, 373, gives the credit of this victory to the Sikhs. Cf. Sarkar, II, 79.

[4] *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 397; *Siyar*, III, 64; Sarkar, II, 90.

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A Marathi despatch says:—"Behind were 3,000 horse and 3,000 foot near Multan. They came safely to this side of Lahore. In the Doab (Jullundur) the *gawars* (villagers) have united and made rows. When some of our men had crossed the Satluj and some were still on the farther bank, they fought and took away 4,000 camels, each worth Rs. 40, looted *mohars* (gold coins) and rupees. 500 men naked from the waist upward came yesterday on foot. 1,000 horses, large and small, have come; all the rest have been given up to plunder. A great disaster has befallen us."[1]

The Sikhs did not fail in their national duty, which the Marathas had so disgracefully shirked. Even in the face of heavy odds they did not allow the Abdali to pass through their country without striking a blow, as is testified to by a Marathi letter which runs:—"Abdali has come to Lahore and fought a great battle with the Sikhs, 2,000 Abdali troops were slain and Jahan Khan was wounded."

Settling of the Sikhs as Territorial Chieftains, October, 1758—October, 1759

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Adina Beg had died on the 15th September and the festival of Diwali fell on the 30th October. Finding no opposition from any quarter, the Sikhs made up their minds to fulfil the prophecy of the last Guru by assuming territorial chieftainships in their respective spheres of activity. It seems probable therefore that they celebrated the Diwali fair of this year with great enthusiasm and rejoicing at Amritsar, where they appear to have declared their new organization of setting up their rule over their protectorates.

By this time the Sikhs had made themselves supreme in the Panjab. They were the only organised power who could defy the tyrannical rule of the Lahore viceroy and could offer resistance to the alien invader. They succeeded where the Marathas had failed. Therefore, if there was any Indian power which had a moral right to rule over the frontier province of the country, it were the Sikhs.

A couple of years ago they had brought some territories under their protection on receiving Rakhi or $\frac{1}{8}$ of the income of the people. Their cavalry swept through the country at harvest time, took their share and repeated the process. The area under influence of each chief was extended by establishing his claim on the neighbouring villages, refusal to the recognition of which meant ruin. Lands

[1]Rajwade, I, 146.

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so visited became the recognized field of action of a particular Sardar or party that had originally entered there, and interference with it, though rare at this time, was resented.[1]

The death of Adina Beg Khan removed the main check on their growing power, and the Sikhs soon spread themselves over the country. They further extended and developed the Rakhi System and became undisputed masters of a great portion of the Panjab. On the territories which had hitherto served as their Rakhi grounds, they set themselves up as territorial chieftains.[2]

In the Jullundur Doab the Sikhs were opposed by Bishambar Das, the Diwan of Adina Beg Khan. He collected an army of 25,000 strong and gave the Sikhs a battle at Urmur Tanda. The raw levies of the Diwan were soon put to flight and he himself was killed in the action. His entire camp, with all its rich paraphernalia fell into the hands of the Sikhs.[3]

The noted local chiefs of some weight and importance both Hindus and Muslims either submitted to the Sikhs on a definite promise to pay them a portion of their revenues, or were swept out of existence, after some resistance on their part. The Sikhs did not create a fuss while acquiring these territories. This being their first venture of this nature, they moved very cautiously. They offered generous treatment to the people whom they had brought under their subjection and treated their powerful neighbours with regard and consideration.[4]

Most of the followers of a particular Sardar considered themselves not as his subordinates but as his associates and partners. They were often his kinsmen, or his village folk or people from the neighbourhood of his native place. They would not submit to him as his inferior. They held up their head and claimed equality as his colleagues co-operating in a common cause. They participated in each enterprize undertaking, and thus regarded the lands now acquired as the common property of all in which each claimed his individual share according to his quota of contribution. These associations called *Misls*, implied that each group was a confederacy of equals under a chief of their own selection. A kind of feudal system was thus established. "The leaders of the confederacies

[1]*Calcutta Review*, October-December, 1884, p. 18.
[2]Bute Shah, 264b.
[3]Bakhtmal, 91; Sohan Lal, I, 149.
[4]Bute Shah, 242b-243a; Ratan Singh, 489-92; Gian Singh, 750-51.

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had under them minor chiefs, and those again their subordinates, till the common soldiers were reached. The country conquered by the confederacy was parcelled out among the chiefs for the support of themselves and their armed retainers, principally troopers. The greater chiefs divided their lands among their subordinate chiefs and these again assigned villages to their dependants for their support Various tenures springing from the system were known as Pattidari, Misldari, Tabadari and Jagirdari. Although each confederacy was independent of the others, yet all of them were looked upon as forming one commonwealth."[1]

This step greatly enhanced their prestige and increased their power. No sooner was it found how profitable was the profession of an outlaw, than every Jat Sikh village of the Majha sent forth its contingent of hardy young men to set themselves up as landed proprietors and to pay off old scores to their oppressors. Thus there arose a new, self-formed aristocracy who were destined to play the role of rulers in the Panjab for about half a century. The possessions of the Sikh chiefs at this time comprised of the major portion of the Jullundur Doab and the northern parts of the Bari Doab.

[1] *Jullundur District Settlement Report*, 1892, pp. 29-30.

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CHAPTER 9

The Malwa Sikhs Under Alha Singh, 1709-1761

Origin of the Malwa Chiefs

It is interesting to note that the Sikhs of Malwa pursued a different line of action from that of their co-religionists of the Majha. They always adopted a diplomatic tone, never defying the Government of the day openly, but increased their power in such a manner as not to arouse the suspicion of the Imperial Government at Delhi.

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The ancestors of the Malwa chiefs, as those of the Majha Sikhs, were simple Hindu peasants. As the central authority of the Mughal Government grew weak the power of these peaceful Jats increased. In course of time they developed their social importance and from mere cultivators of the lands rose to be the owners of those same lands. They acquired further grants of land, founded villages and became wealthy. With the beginning of the seventeenth century these chiefs became converts to the Sikh religion. In the years of anarchy that followed in the early part of the eighteenth century these Sikhs daily gained power and territory.

Progress under Alha Singh

Thus arose the great Cis-Satluj Sardars whose acknowledged head was the Phulkian house of which Alha Singh was the representative, with the closely allied families of Bhadaur, Nabha, Jind, Malod, Badraka, Jiundan, Dyalpura, Laudgharia, Rampur and Kot Dhuna, and the more distantly connected house of Faridkot. These numerous branches of a vigorous stock have all decended from a common ancestor of the great Sidhu Brar tribe, the most powerful Jat clan between the Jamuna and the Satluj. Alha Singh, the founder of the Patiala State, succeeded his father Rama in 1714 in the lordship of a few villages, the number of which in 1723 was only

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thirty.[1] He entered upon his career of extending his territory partly by establishing new towns and partly by conquering other places in his neighbourhood. He rebuilt Barnala in 1722 and Longowal in 1727. Shortly afterwards he desolated Mina, the possession of Sondhe Khan Rajput, who was related to the powerful Rae Kalha of Kot. The Rae thereupon organized a confederacy to destroy the growing power of Alha Singh, and collecting a strong force of Rajput chiefs, consisting of the sons of Fatah Khan of Talwandi, Dalel Khan of Halwara, Qutab-ud-din of Malsian, the chief of Fatahpur, Naurang Khan of Talwan, Malak Nakodar of Nakodar, Jamal Khan of Malerkotla and Sayyid Asad Ali Khan, the imperial *faujdar* of the Jullundur Doab, attacked Alha Singh at Barnala, 80 kms west of Patiala, lying in the centre of the jungle tract. Alha Singh was not unaware of the intention and movements of his enemy. He realised that he was not able to cope single-handed with the serious situation in case of a combined attack. He brought the Majha Sikhs to his help at Barnala. In the contest that followed the imperial general was killed and the troops of Malerkotla and Raekot evacuated the field, thus leaving a complete victory to the Sikhs.[2] This was for the first time that the acquaintance between the Majha Sikhs and Alha Singh was formed. Alha Singh, out of gratitude for the Sikh help, took *pahul* from Dip Singh, the leader of the Majha Sikhs, and became a regular Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh.[3]

This victory established Alha Singh's position as an independent chief, and daring Sikh youths from all parts of Malwa region began to flock to his standard. The next fourteen years were spent in desultory warfare with the neighbouring Bhatti Rajputs. In 1745 Alha Singh allied himself with Ali Muhammad Rohilla, the Governor of Sarhind, in breaking the power of the Rae of Kot; but in turn he was also imprisoned in the fort of Sunam and his capital Barnala given over to plunder, while his family fled away to Bhatinda. He might have perished in prison but for the self-sacrifice of a follower named Karma who secured his release by a stratagem in 1747.[4]

[1]Karam Singh, 87.
[2]ibid, 95-103.
[3]ibid, 103.
[4]ibid, 24, 126-32.

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Alha Singh's help to the Imperialists

Just at this time Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India. Ali Muhammad Khan took flight to Aonla to avoid fighting with his Afghan brother. The imperial army under Prince Ahmad Shah lay encamped in the neighbourhood of Alha Singh for a couple of months. Alha Singh lost no time in offering submission and in paying homage to the imperial authority. He readily fought under the imperial banners and rendered useful service in cutting off the supplies of the Durranis, for which he won the approbation of the Crown Prince. Anandram of Lahore who was present in the battle of Manupur observes:—"When the enemy (Afghans) went out to bring a supply of grain and grass, they never returned safe on account of the assault of the champions of the Imperialist army. Sometimes a party of their troops went a few miles away from their camp with horses and camels in order to fetch a supply of provisions and fodder and were followed by another contingent for protection. Very often with the assistance of fortune, Alha, zamindar of some villages of Sarhind, and Rae Kalha, zamindar of the Doab, fell upon them with great valour and pluck, killed and wounded most of them, and brought string after string of camels, and were consequently honoured with the grant of khila'ts, horses and cash.[1]

Extension of Alha Singh's territories

The next ten years were consumed in extending his possessions and in fighting the Bhattis. He took Munak in 1749 and fortified it next year. He also established his thāna at Tohāna. Gurbakhsh Singh Kaleka took Sanaur (6 kms south-east of Patiala) parganah consisting of 84 villages, in 1752, when Patiala town was founded for holding the neighbouring territory in check. In 1754 Alha Singh conquered Bulada with the assistance of 12,000 of the Dal Khalsa who happened to be at this time in his territory. The same year he defeated Muhammad Amin Khan Bhatti in the battle of Khudal.

In 1757 Ahmad Shah Abdali appointed Abdus Samad Khan the Governor of Sarhind, and following the traditional custom Alha Singh presented himself before him to render submission. Abdus Samad Khan was so much impressed with the Sikh Chief that he took him into his confidence regarding all important State matters.

[1]Cf. *Husain Shahi*, 26; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 7; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 126; *Jullundur Gazetteer*, 1904, p. 29.

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Muhammad Amin Khan Bhatti could not tolerate the growing power of Alha Singh, and so he managed to turn Abdus Samad against him. As a consequence, an action took place between the two chiefs at Rampur, in which the Governor of Sarhind was defeated and the parganahs of Jamalpur and Dharmul consisting of 84 villages were seized by Alha Singh.[1]

Alha Singh aids the Delhi Emperor

On the 22nd September, 1758 Emperor Alamgir II of Delhi and his Wazir Imād-ul-Mulk reached Hansi, halted there for some days, collected tribute from the district and then advanced towards Bhuna. The Baluch zamindar of the place named Musa Khan fought against the imperialists who besieged him. The Emperor had a fainting fit and the siege was raised after a tribute had been agreed upon. In their march to Sarsa and Rania the progress of the imperial army was checked by several impediments such as the dense jungle, the river Ghaggar and scarcity of water and food. To add to these misfortunes, they were very much harassed by the constant attacks of the Bhattis. The result was that the imperialists suffered badly. At this juncture Alha Singh came to the succour of the Emperor, saw the Wazir personally and supplied him with ample provisions of food and fodder.[2]

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Change in Patiala Rajah's policy

Till 1758 Alha Singh had not touched any imperial fort and had always submitted to the imperial officers whenever they happened to pass through or near his territory. But by the end of this year finding his co-religionists of the Majha busy in speedy appropriation of territories, he also did not like to lose the opportunity, and taking advantage of the utter futility of the Delhi Empire, he began to extend his possessions at the expense of the imperial domains. The conquest of Sunam was the first venture of this kind.

In 1759 Alha Singh extended his territory towards Bagar and annexed Narwana, Kalwan, Dhamtan, Dharaundi, Belrakha, Kharal, Lawan, Pipalbeh, Danaudi, and Bathumana.

The same year he came into conflict with Sadiq Beg, the Governor of Sarhind, whose Diwan Lachhmi Narayan sought the assistance of Alha Singh against his master. The Sikh chief, confident of his

[1]Karam Singh, 180-82.
[2]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 351-52.

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resources, afforded him refuge. By this act he provoked the wrath of the Sarhind Governor who invaded his territory. Alha Singh gave him many a slip and ultimately engaged him in skirmishes. In November Ahmad Shah again invaded India and when he approached Sarhind, Sadiq Beg suddenly raised the siege and fled away headlong out of the reach of the Afghan invader.[1]

Alha Singh helps the Marathas at Panipat

During the campaign of Panipat, Ahmad Shah Abdali had succeeded in isolating the Marathas on all sides, and thus provisions were running short in their camp. Alha Singh cleverly managed to send convoys of grain to the Marathas in return for large sums of money. This was brought to the notice of the Durrani, who at once despatched a detachment to cow down the chief effectually. At the time of the approach of the Durrani troops Alha Singh was away from his seat of government to Munak and the capital was under the charge of his wife Rani Fatto, a woman of remarkable address and diplomacy.

The Rani at once despatched four officers, Bhola Singh, Kashmiri Mal, Kanha Mal and Biram Dhilon to the Durrani camp at Panipat to settle the terms of peace. She herself retired with her grandson Amar Singh to Munak. But before these agents reached the Durrani camp, the Afghan troops gave up Barnala to plunder and retired on receiving a tribute of four lakhs of rupees.[2]

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Alha Singh receives a rescript from the Durrani, 29th March, 1761

After the battle of Panipat Ahmad Shah started for home leaving his plenipotentiary Najib-ud-daulah as dictator in Delhi. When he reached Sarhind, Alha Singh presented himself before the Durrani, offered him costly gifts and promised to pay him an annual tribute of 5 lakhs. He was warmly received and was awarded a robe of honour. Simultaneously, at the desire of Alha Singh an order was issued to the Governor of Sarhind on the 29th March, 1761 under the seal and signature of Abdali's Wazir, Shah Vali Khan, to the purpose that he should consider the possessions of Alha Singh as separate from the territory under his own jurisdiction and look upon Alha Singh's friends as his own friends and

[1]Karam Singh, 188-98.

[2]*Khazana-e-Amira*, 107; *S.P.D.*, XXVII, 262; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 101a; *Tarikh-e-Patiala*, 55-57.

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his enemies as his own enemies, and that anybody who would cherish feelings of enmity towards Alha Singh would be considered hostile to the Durrani kingdom. To avoid any conflict with the chief of Sarhind, Mirza Muhammad Taqi was appointed to realize tribute from this Sikh chief. At that time Alha Singh's estate consisted of only 726 towns and villages.[1]

On the retirement of the Abdali from India, the Dal Khalsa felt enraged at the conduct of Alha Singh in having submitted to a Muslim against the commandments of the tenth Guru. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who was a friend of the Malwa chief, imposed a fine on Alha Singh and thus pacified the Dal.[2]

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[1]Karam Singh, 212-13.

[2]*ibid*, 209-11; *Tarikh-e-Patiala*, 55-57. Cf. *S.P.D.*, XXI, 202.

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CHAPTER 10

Sikhs Take Lahore and Coin Money, October, 1759—November, 1761

Marathas expelled from the Panjab

The Maratha expulsion of his son Timur Shah from the Panjab had enraged Ahmad Shah Durrani to the utmost, and he resolved to settle the Maratha menace once for all. He made huge preparations at home while Najib-ud-daulah, his best ally, facilitated his work in India.

With his enormous hordes Ahmad Shah Durrani started for India early in the autumn of 1759 and arrived at Lahore in October. On the approach of these overwhelming forces, the Marathas fled from the Panjab without even striking a blow. He left Jarchi Karim Dad Khan, nephew of his prime minister, Shah Vali Khan, in charge of Lahore with instructions to send him supplies of grain, arms and ammunition. Raja Ghamand Chand of Kangra was appointed Governor of the Jullundur Doab as well as the hill country between the Satluj and the Ravi.[1]

Abdali then encamped in the Koil parganah (modern Aligarh) in order to wait for the new Maratha forces coming up from the Deccan. Here Ahmad Shah also succeeded in winning over Shuja-ud-daulah of Oudh to his side, who joined him at the head of 30,000 horse and 10,000 foot.

The Poona Court on being apprised of these events prepared for a great effort to maintain their supremacy in Northern India. In May began the northward march of the huge Maratha forces under the leadership of Sadashiv Bhau.

The Bhau crossed the Chambal at the end of May, 1760, and a little later he reached the Jamuna which was in flood on account of early rains. He marched towards Delhi. The city fell on the 22nd

[1] Ali-ud-din, 119b-120a; *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, *Punjab*, I, 357.

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of afternoon prayer till midnight.

"We spent the night in the greatest anxiety and irresolution. When the day dawned I saw that the Sikhs and zamindars were running in crowds to fight us, and our men were driven back every moment. They very loudly shouted, 'Hand over Rustam Khan, Governor of Chahar Mahal, to us'! We also continued showering bullets on them for about an hour and a half and afterwards our supply of ammunition ran short. The Sikhs growing bolder came just below the fort. In this state of helplessness we threw on them from the top of the fort clods of earth, pieces of stone, broken earthen vessels, and pieces of wood, in short, whatever we could lay our hands on. We kept them back with bravery and courage till noon, and did not allow them to approach us. At last the Sikhs climbed up to the tower and began to break the walls.

"At this Rustam Khan, I and other six men, tied pieces of cloth round our waists and brandishing swords came out of the door. By chance my foot slipped near the gate, and I fell down The Sikhs at once captured me on the spot, and a few paces ahead they took Rustam Khan also captive. One of our companions named Alahvardi Beg was slain By that time the number of Sikhs and zamindars had swelled to 20,000. They brought us to the same village where they were originally fighting. At nightfall they demanded one lakh of rupees from me (by way of ransom). The discussion was prolonged till midnight, and ultimately the bargain was struck at Rs. 6,000. It was settled that I should go to my village the next day, give them an order on (some banker) of Jammu, and on receiving the money they would leave me safely in Jammu.

"Consequently, early next morning two or three Sikhs started for my place. About 100 other Sikhs were also going in that direction. They took me on horseback for 8 or 9 kms, and afterwards they forced me to walk on foot. I had gone 22 kms. My feet were aching, and I was feeling exhausted. Then I caught sight of Pasrur city from a distance of 8 or 9 kms. At that time the Sikh on my horse recited the name of his Guru and said, 'O Guru! whosoever utters your name in the morning, never gets disappointed in any undertaking.' On hearing this prayer I fell aweeping. I also remembered God and said, 'O most high protector! I am your humble creature. Help me now and liberate me from the hands of the Sikhs.' I was saying this prayer when my eyes fell on a towering fort on the way. The zamindar of that place fell upon the Sikhs with 40 or 50 armed

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soldiers (*barqandaz*), defeated them, and carried off all their plundered goods and baggage. He also brought me into his fort. At the time of the evening prayer that Sikh who was driving me sent the zamindar of the fort a word that the Mughal whom he had seized was to be ransomed by the chief of the Sikhs for Rs. 6,000, and that he was responsible for that sum. On hearing this I was kept in a tower under strict vigilance."[1]

Miskin remained in captivity for ten days, and suffered much from want and violence. As the zamindar of the fort did not know his position, he took him for an ordinary Mughal soldier, and liberated him receiving only Rs. 200 from him. Rustam Khan was, however, subjected to a greater misery, and ultimately released on the extortion of Rs. 22,000.[2]

The Sikhs attack Lahore, but spare it for a tribute of Rs. 30,000, c. November, 1760

Sa'adat Yar Khan held the charge of Lahore for a few months; but every day he felt the reins of government slipping away from his hold. The Sikhs had become entirely uncontrollable and the other zamindars had either joined them or submitted to them. The Government was thoroughly helpless and powerless. Thus the Afghan administration again broke down in the Panjab.

Even Sa'adat Yar's resignation could not move the indolent Sarbuland Khan from Jullundur to take over the charge of the province in person. He now thought of trying a non-Muslim, and offered the post to Surat Singh, a noted banker of Lahore. This man understood the situation well and politely declined to entangle himself in a conflict with the Sikhs. He was again pressed to carry on the government for some time till a suitable candidate for the post could be found. He did so, and then Mir Muhammad Khan was given the charge of the administration. No sooner was he appointed Governor than he was called upon to face a huge assemblage of the Sikhs, who had gathered together at Amritsar to celebrate the Diwali early in November, 1760, when they passed a *Gurmata* to attack Lahore.

The Sikhs, numbering about 10,000, fell on the city. Mir Muhammad shut the gates and himself retired to the fort for safety. The Sikhs cut off all means of communication with the city, plundered

[1]Miskin, 218-21.
[2]ibid, 222-4.

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the suburbs and destroyed the growing crops of wheat, gram, mustard, cotton. and sugarcane. They also stripped the houses of their timber wood and set them on fire afterwards. Then they tried to break through the city walls. This caused a panic in the city, and the prominent citizens persuaded the Governor to pay the Sikhs Rs 30,000 by way of an offering of '*Karah parshad*' to their Granth out of the revenues of Ahmad Shah Durrani.[1] This was done and the Sikhs eventually retired.

The Sikhs harass the retreating Durrani, April-May, 1761

The molestation of the Durrani by the Sikhs began from the Satluj when he crossed it on his return early in April. Being loaded with the rich booty of Delhi and the Doab, he could not turn his attention towards them and saved himself by throwing up 'a slight work' round his camp every night. At the ferry of Goindwal on the Beas the Sikhs are said to have relieved the invader of a number of captives, who were afterwards sent to their homes.[2]

From Lahore Ahmad Shah sent out a few expeditions against the Sikhs, but their activities did not abate. Some of the Sikhs who were captured, were put to death with a thousand and one tortures, but the Khalsa looked upon such deaths as nothing more than the trampling down of a few ants.[3]

Administrative arrangements made by the Durrani, May, 1761

Before leaving the Panjab, Ahmad Shah Durrani appointed Sarbuland Khan to the *subahdari* of Multan, Khwajah Abed to that of Lahore, while Raja Ghamand Chand Katoch of Kangra was entrusted with the government of the Jullundur Doab, with Saadat Khan and Sadiq Khan Afridi, the Durrani *faujdars*, as his deputies, and Zain Khan Mohmand was given charge of the Sarhind province. All of them were given clear instructions to punish the Sikhs, and it seems probable that with this view, the Abdali selected two local men as governors of the Lahore Province and the Jullundur Doab, both of these territories being strongholds of Sikhism. "To defend

[1]Ali-ud-din, 120a-121b. Cf. Sohan Lal, I, 150; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 104-115; Kanhiyalal's *Tarikh-e-Panjab*, 83.

[2]Browne, II, 22; Gian Singh, 759-60; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 105; *Sikh Martyrs*, 184.

[3]Ganesh Das, 199. Cf. Ratan Singh, 430; Gian Singh, 738-42; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 98.

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his possessions Gomand Chand raised a force of 4,000 men. composed chiefly of Rohillas, Afghans and Rajputs, drawn from the Delhi and Afghan forces, to whom he gave liberal pay or five rupees a month for each footman, and twenty for each horseman."[1]

The roving bands of the Sikhs did not allow any rest to the retreating Afghan army till the Indus was crossed. They "hovered about the Afghan line of march, cutting off the supplies and doing what damage they could but never making a direct attack."[2]

Sikhs spread havoc all over the Panjab, c. June—July, 1761

Having left the Durrani on the Indus, the Sikhs, numbering 40,000, came to this side of the Chenab and plundered the country all around. Nawab Khwajah Mirza Khan, ex-governor of Lahore, then in charge of the Chahar Mahal, met the Sikhs at the head of 1,000 horse and foot, but his troops were instantly annihilated and he was beheaded.[3]

Flushed with this victory they marched onward and entered the Jullundur Doab. Saadat Khan and Sadiq Khan Afridi, the *faujdars* of the place, were defeated and driven away. "They were expelled like a fly out of milk."[4] Now Sarhind lay in sight, and under the impulse of uniform success they did not like to spare it. They concerted a plan of action and marched towards Sarhind. Zain Khan was at this time out on an administrative tour, but on hearing of this approach of the Sikhs he hurried back at once towards the seat of his government. The Sikhs on getting this news suddenly fell upon the town under the leadership of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, defeated Zain Khan's deputy and began to devastate the accursed city against which their wrath knew no bounds. They succeeded in plundering only a portion of the place, because inside the city they were actively opposed by Bhikhan Khan, the ruler of Malerkotla. By this time Zain Khan also had arrived and the Sikhs instantaneously fled away from the city.[5]

The Sikhs resented the action of the Afghan chief Bhikhan Khan, who had stood between them and the loot of Sarhind. They decided

[1] *Travels of Moorcroft and Trebeck*, I, 127; Khushwaqt Rae, 94.

[2] *Rajas of the Punjab*, 230. Cf. Forster, I, 318; Bakhtmal, 96-7; Sohan Lal, I, 153; Browne, II, 22.

[3] Miskin, 237.

[4] ibid.

[5] Browne, II, 23; Bakhtmal, 97; Ahmad Shah, 893; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 110.

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to punish him and suddenly turned towards Malerkotla, which lay unprotected at this time. The town was 50 kms away. They covered the distance in one day and took the people of the place by surprise. The town was immediately besieged and its supplies were entirely cut off. The suburbs were burnt to ashes and the outskirts thoroughly plundered. The fort soon capitulated and the town was given a thorough squeezing.[1]

After the discomfiture of these chiefs, the life and property of the people became quite unsafe. The security on roads in the plains of the Panjab ceased to exist, and the traveller and trader resorted to the difficult and troublesome but safer hill-route running through the low hills of the Shiwalik range. Miskin travelling from Jammu to Sarhind could not venture to follow easier plain route which was closed by the Sikh disturbances. He journeyed through the hills via Shahpur, Nurpur, Jawalamukhi, Nadaun, etc. and took sixteen days in reaching Sarhind.[2]

Abdali's General Nur-ud-din is defeated by the Sikhs, c. August, 1761

Ahmad Shah Abdali had neither forgotten nor forgiven the Sikhs for harassing him during his retreat through the Panjab on his return from Delhi. But he had then been too much hampered by the rebellious attitude of his troops and military impediments to organize any sustained effort for the suppression of their guerilla attacks. He had therefore secured his retreat as best as he could, chafing at his inability to turn aside and exact retribution.[3]

With a view to facilitating his return he had left at Lahore much of his heavy baggage including the monster gun called Zamzama, capable of throwing a shot of one maund (40 kilograms) in weight and which was looked upon as a marvel. In his contest with the Marathas at Panipat (October, 1760—January, 1761) the strength of the Durrani with regard to the possession of a park of artillery was inferior. Consequently he had ordered his representatives in the Panjab to cast guns of a good calibre and send them on to him in the battlefield. Accordingly two guns of the same size were cast at Lahore in conformity with the instructions of Shah Vali Khan. Their material consisted of a mixture of copper and brass, obtained

[1]Bakhtmal, 97; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 100; Browne, II, 23.
[2]Miskin, 237-8.
[3]Sohan Lal, II, 6.

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from a heap of vessels which were collected from Hindu houses. The date of casting the Zamzama (1175 AH) is derived from a Persian line engraved upon it: *Paikar-e-Azdahā-e-Ātishbār.*[1]

On arriving within the safe confines of Afghanistan he planned and fitted out an expedition against the Sikhs under the care of one of his trusted generals Nur-ud-din Khan. Instructions were despatched at the same time to his Panjab Governors to co-operate with him. Nur-ud-din entered India (*c.* early August) and crossing the Jehlam at Khushab, marched up the left bank of the river. His troops committed all kinds of violence and depredation and laid waste the three largest towns of the Doab, Bhera, Miani and Chak Sanu.[2]

As soon as Nur-ud-din arrived on the banks of the Chenab, he came into conflict with Sardar Charat Singh of the Sukarchakia Misl. Charat Singh, anticipating the trouble, had already moved from his headquarters at Gujranwala to arrest the further progress of the Afghan general. He was assisted by the other *Misldars* who had made a common cause with him. Thus assuming the defensive with his army of trained men, Charat Singh awaited the onslaught of the Afghans whom after a battle of considerable duration he repulsed. He followed up his victory by maintaining a vigorous pursuit of the fugitives.

The Afghans, about 12,000 in number, fleeing pellmell, took refuge in the stronghold of Sialkot. The town was immediately besieged and the strictness of the watch was such as supplies gave out and the garrison was brought to the verge of starvation. Nur-ud-din, finding his men demoralized and starving, abandoned them to their fate and disguised as a beggar sought refuge in flight. The garrison immediately surrendered, and were allowed to depart in peace.

This victory over the well-trained troops of the greatest soldier of the day placed Charat Singh in the front rank of the Sikh leaders, while the booty of Sialkot brought him a quantity of artillery and baggage. When all was over Charat Singh made a triumphal entry

[1]ibid, 6; *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Punjab, II, 127. "Bhera and Miani rose again from their ruins, but only the foundations of Chak Sanu now mark its former site." ibid, 128.

[2]Sohan Lal, II, 6.

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into his capital at Gujranwala.[1]

Khwajah Abed defeated and routed by the Sikhs at Gujranwala, c. September, 1761

The recent victories of the Sikhs emboldened them to infest the very neighbourhood of Lahore. "Their violence increased so much that the collection of the revenues stopped at every place. Khwajah Abed Khan in view of these difficulties recruited an army 9 to 10 thousand horse and foot. He also enlisted 4 or 5 hundred Sikhs under Sahib Singh Korbast. Then he wished to punish Bhim Singh and Sarup Singh of village Manka who carried on their predatory excursions mostly in the neighbourhood of Lahore. Afterwards he wanted to turn his attention towards Sardar Charat Singh of Gujranwala who had built a fortress near Sarai Kamboh, wherefrom he started on his plundering raids.[2]

The Khwajah was advised by his courtiers and frie ds not to undertake such a vain expedition. But this inexperienced fellow insisted on sallying forth.

In order to strengthen his position he enrolled 1,000 Sikhs from the Jullundur Doab in addition to the number already retained in his service. He took ten or twelve pieces of cannon, marched from Lahore, collected the revenues of Sharaqpur and other places and arrived near Gujranwala.[3]

Charat Singh was ready to meet the foe. He had gathered a large army and strongly garrisoned his fort. Khwajah Abed had first entrenched himself at Eminabad, but later on he took up a fortified position before Gujranwala. Charat Singh, leaving a strong garrison behind him, at once began an aggressive action in which the reckless valour of the Sikhs drove the enemy within their entrenchments.[4]

In the meantime the news of the siege of the fort of Gujranwala had spread far and wide. The Sikh leaders, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hari Singh Bhangi, Jhanda Singh, Gujar Singh, Jai Singh Kanhiya, Lahna Singh and Sobha Singh began to muster strong for the relief

[1]ibid, 7; Bute Shah, 308b.

[2]This fortress of Gujranwala was built in 1758 AD Khushwaqt Rae, 188; Ali-ud-din, 122b-123a.

[3]Ahmad Shah, 890. His total strength is estimated at 20,000 by Khushwaqt Rae, 188; Miskin, 237; Ali-ud-din, 123a.

[4]Sohan Lal, II, 7.

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of Charat Singh. They came to Gujranwala, and encamped 6 kms distant.

Khwajah Abed was thus besieged in his turn. Even the Sikhs whom he had recently recruited for the occasion, were won over by their co-religionists and decided to desert the Khwajah. A combined night attack on the Khwajah's troops was proposed by the Sikhs. This news leaked out to Abed Khan, who was so much terrified that he took to flight after nightfall without striking a blow. The Sikhs were not unaware of the Governor's movement. They suddenly fell upon his troops, who fled away in all directions leaving everything in the field. The booty obtained by the victors was considerable, consisting of swivels, pieces of cannon, horses, camels, stores of provisions, vessels and other camp baggage.[1]

Khwajah Abed Khan with a few attendants fled in the night to Jaukāliān. Then accompanied by 500 horse and foot of Chaudhari Mian Khan Chatha and Ismail Khan Kharal, he reached Sharaqpur wherefrom he was conveyed to Lahore attended by Jamal Arain and other zamindars of the place.

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This splendid victory added a new lustre to the glory of Charat Singh, who having now leisure and means set to work to rebuild and fortify the place. On the walls of his fort he also mounted a number of guns and stored the magazine with plenty of ammunition.[2]

The Sikhs capture Lahore and coin money, c. Nov., 1761

The continuous round of rapid victories achieved by the Sikhs within a short space of about four months after the departure of Ahmad Shah laid practically the whole of the Panjab at their feet. They, therefore, performed a thanksgiving service at Amritsar on the occasion of the Diwali festival, which fell on October 22, 1761. There they held a general assembly and passed a *Gurmata* that they must punish their inveterate enemy Guru Aqil Das of Jandiala and capture Lahore, without the possession of which they could not look upon themselves as the supreme power in the Land of the Five Rivers.[3]

Consequently the Dal Khalsa, under their chief leader, marched

[1]Khushwaqt Rae, 94-104; Ahmad Shah, 890-91; Sohan Lal, II, 8; Ali-ud-din, 123a; Bakhtmal, 82; Miskin, 237.

[2]Sohan Lal, II, 8; Bute Shah, 308b.

[3]Miskin, 237; Khushwaqt Rae, 94; Ali-ud-din, 123b.

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upon Lahore in a body, laid siege to the city, and cut off all communications, allowing nobody to come in or go out of the town. Khwajah Abed Khan shut himself up in the fort and did not stir out to oppose them. The noted citizens, knowing the weakness of the Governor, opened negotiations with Jassa Singh, and threw open the gates of the city. Now there were two rulers in one place, the Sikhs in the city and Khwajah Abed Khan in the fort. The Sikhs attacked the fort, killed Khwajah Abed Khan, and seized the citadel also. In a fit of enthusiasm and delight the Sikhs fulfilled the wishes of their revered leader, the late Nawab Kapur Singh, by declaring Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as *Padishah*. Then seizing the royal mint, they struck the second Sikh rupee which bore the following inscription:

Sikkā zad dar Jahān bafazal-e-Akāl,
Mulk-e-Ahmad garift Jassa Kalāl.

Coin struck in the world by the grace of God, in the country of Ahmad captured by Jassa Kalāl.[1]

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The capture of the provincial capital which had remained in possession of the foreigners for nearly 750 years and coining of money marked the highest point, though temporarily, in the evolution of the Sikh power. The people of the Panjab now realized that even in case the Khalsa were expelled from Lahore, they were destined to become its masters sooner or later. But as the irony of fate would have it, this greatest glory of the Sikhs was to be followed, only within three months, by the hardest blow they had ever sustained after the death of Banda Bahadur.

Examination of the date and event

At this place it seems necessary to offer a word of explanation regarding the date of this coin. Most of the writers on Sikh history have stated that the Sikhs alone expelled Timur Shah and Jahan Khan from Lahore, occupied the provincial capital, declared their sovereignty, and their leader Jassa Singh struck coins in his own name in 1758.[2]

[1] *Khazana-e-Amira*, 113-14; *Siyar*, III, 74; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 121b-122a; Sohan Lal, I, 46-47; Ahmad Shah, 889; *Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 173; Gian Singh, 809-10.

[2] Cf. Browne, II, 19; Malcolm, 94-95; Bakhtmal, 82; Khushwaqt Rae, 104; Elphinstone's *Caubul* II, 289; Cunningham, 105; Latif's *Punjab*, 231; Gordon, 61; Narang, 148.

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Browne is the earliest writer who has mentioned this date in his book. He says, "The Sicks collected together under their chiefs from all quarters, and blockading the city of Lahore, collected the revenues of the country all around for their own use. Jehan Khan with the prince, marched out to give them battle, but after several actions, finding the Sicks too numerous for him to contend with, he retreated to Kandahar. Upon this occasion, Jessa Singh Kalal, who was at the time Commander-in-Chief of the Dul struck rupees in his own name, at the royal mint at Lahore, with the following inscription.'

'Jessa Kalal conquered the country of Ahmed and struck this coin by the grace of God.'

Browne based his account on the authority of two Panjabis whose dates are admitted as "extremely defective" even by Browne himself. In the Introduction on pp. iii & iv he states: Having met with two Hindoos of considerable knowledge, who were natives of Lahore, where they had resided the greater part of their lives, and who had in their possession, accounts of the rise and progress of the Sicks, written in the Nuggary (or common Hindoo) character, I persuaded them to let me have a translation of one of them in the Persian language, abridging it as much as they could do, without injuring essential purpose of information. After all, I found it extremely defective in a regular continuation of dates, and therefore not deserving the name of a history." Browne is followed by Malcolm, Elphinstone, Cunningham, Gordon, Latif and G. C. Narang.

It has already been explained on the authority of eye-witness Tahmas Khan Miskin and the contemporary author of *Tarikh-e Alamgir Sani* that the Marathas and the Sikhs jointly seized Lahore in April 1758, that Jahan Khan and Prince Timur had fled away, and that Panjab had been leased out by the Marathas to Adina Beg Khan for an annual tribute of 75 lakhs of rupees. So the question of a Sikh coin being struck in 1758 does not arise at all. We will now examine its possible date.

Miskin had left Lahore three years earlier and hence his authority fails us on this occasion. But the contemporary author of *Khazana-e-Amira*, compiling his account sometime between July, 1762 and July, 1763 says that the Sikhs killed the Durrani Governor of Lahore, captured the capital and issued their own coin. It was due to these facts that Ahmad Shah invaded India, inflicted

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a severe defeat on the Sikhs and massacred about 29,000 of them. He writes:

"The Sikh people of the Panjab, from the earliest times, have been a source of mischief and sedition. They are bigoted enemies of the Musalmans. In spite of the fact that the Shah had so many times over-run India, owing to the want of foresight, they raised the standard of rebellion and disturbance, and killed his viceroy at Lahore. They raised a person named Jassa Singh from among themselves to the status of a king, and like the demon, they made him sit on the throne of Jamshid, and blackened the face of the coin with his name. Having taken possession of the city of Lahore and its vicinity, they molested God's creatures in general and the Muslims in particular. Hearing this news, Shah Durrani, according to his established practice, again moved towards India."[1]

We have assigned November, 1761, as the probable date of the minting of this coin. There were only three peoples who were attempting to establish their own rule in Northern India. They were the Jats, Marathas and the Sikhs. The Jat power had been shaken by Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1757.[2] The Maratha power was crushed by him at Panipat in 1761. Only the Sikhs were left to be dealt with. If they were humbled to the dust, the whole of Northern India lay at his feet. For this purpose he was making preparations. A Marathi letter dated October 27, 1761, says that Abdali's advance-guard had arrived at Attock. Another Marathi letter dated November 17, 1761, states that the Sikhs were causing tumult in Lahore[3], Ahmad Shah Durrani came to Panjab in January 1762, and killed about 20,000 Sikhs in the battle of Kup on February 5, 1762. This holocaust is termed by the Sikhs as Ghallughārā.

The famous Sikh historian Sir Lepel Griffin wrote:

"Nor were these coins struck before 1762, not in 1757-8 as stated by Cunningham; and it is very doubtful whether they were struck in large numbers at all. The Raja of Kapurthala has none in his possession, nor do I know anyone who has seen[4] one." Gian Singh says that this coin was struck in 1761.[5]

[1] *Khazana-e-Amira*, 114.
[2] *S.P.D.*, XXIX, 16.
[3] ibid, 24.
[4] *Rajas of the Punjab*, fn., p. 461.
[5] *Raj Khalsa*, 374 (Urdu).

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N.K. Sinha, in his *Rise of the Sikh Power*, 94, without quoting any authority, agrees with some modern Sikh writers, that these coins were not struck at all. They advance the following reasons for it:

1. It is insulting for a Sikh to be addressed without the surname of Singh. Khushwaqt Rae on folio 104 of his *Kitab-e-Tarikh-e-Panjab* says: "But the coin enjoyed a short span of life, because its circulation was stopped on account of the contempt of the half name, which was imprinted on this coin."

2. A Sikh would never claim any credit to himself but to the Guru. Even Ranjit Singh, on having established his monarchy, did not issue a coin in his own name. Regarding this objection, the Muslim historian Ahmad Yādgār in his *Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 173, states that the Sikhs felt pinched on giving the credit of their victory to a Sikh and not to the Guru. In consequence they stopped the circulation of this coin and struck another in the name of the Guru. Sir Lepel Griffin writes:

"Soon after the last expulsion of the Aumils of the Durrani Shah, the Sikhs held a general diet at Amritsar, in which they determined to call in the rupees which were struck in the name of Jessa Kalal and to strike them for the future in the name of their Gooroos, with an inscription to this effect, 'Gooroo Gobind Singh received from Nanak, the Daig, the sword and rapid victory', which coin is current throughout their dominions to this day."[1]

3. The coin is not available anywhere, and no historian claims having seen it. This has already been explained as the circulation of these coins was stopped. The few coins which had been minted were called in and melted for the new coin.

4. Jassa Singh could not have issued coin in his own name, because it would have meant the loss of confidence of his comrades. It may be pointed out that Jassa Singh never tried to impose his authority on the Sikhs. It were the Sikhs who called him *Padishah*, and later on March 11, 1783, they made him sit on the Mughal throne in the Diwan-e-Am in Red Fort, Delhi and addressed him as Badshah Singh. This honour was withdrawn by Jassa Singh immediately.

5. He could not have used the title Kalāl (distiller of wine). The

[1] *Rajas of the Punjab*, 461, f.n.; C.T. Rodgers in the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, LIV, 1885, Part I, 67-76; R.C. Temple in *Indian Antiquary*, XVIII, 1889, p. 321.

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Sikhs in those days were simple people, and did not conceal their origin. The sardars of the strongest Sikh Misl called themselves Bhangi with great pride. Jassa Singh did not object to word Kalāl also in view of the rhyme of the verse to be inscribed on the coin

6. Ganesh Das asserts that these coins were minted by the bigoted *mullāns* of Lahore, and were sent to Kabul to excite the spirit of revenge of Ahmad Shah Abdali against the Sikhs.[1] Ganesh Das does not give any source for this statement. He compiled his account in 1849, nearly one hundred years later. His isolated authority cannot be accepted. Besides, he places this event in 1765, evidently referring to another coin of that year.

Thus it seems certain that the Sikhs occupied Lahore in November, 1761, that they struck a coin first in the name of Jassa Singh, and soon afterwards in the names of Gurus Nanak and Gobind Singh.

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[1] *Risālā-e-Sāhib Numā* .210.

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CHAPTER 11

Ghallughara and Sikh Retaliation, 1762

The Sikhs besiege Jandiala, c. January, 1762

Having secured their position in Lahore, the Sikhs proceeded to avenge the wrongs done to them by Guru Aqil Das of Jandiala. This Guru, as has already been alluded to, had always sided with the Panjab Governors against the Sikhs, and had made submission to Ahmad Shah Durrani. The intention of the Sikhs to punish him had leaked out to Aqil Das, and anticipating the trouble he secretly despatched special messengers to Ahmad Shah Abdali, reminding the Durrani of his previous personal services and requesting his help against the impending danger. The Abdali had already started for India, and he granted an interview to these envoys at Rohtas. On hearing their tale of woe he quickened his speed and by forced marches reached Lahore in four days' time. Meanwhile the Sikhs had besieged the walled town of Jandiala and laid waste the entire territory of Aqil Das. The Sikhs would have succeeded in capturing the place had not their efforts been foiled, as we are given to understand by the author of *Husain Shahi*, by the suspension of shanks of beef from the fort walls. Overpowered by their religious scruples, the Sikhs raised the siege and retired towards the territory of Zain Khan, the Governor of Sarhind.[1]

Ghallughara (Bloody Carnage), 5th February, 1762

On receiving intelligence from Aqil Das, Abdali[2] arrived at Jandiala, but found that the Sikhs had left the place. Determined to go in their pursuit, he returned to Lahore and sent his scouts to

[1]Ali-ud-din, 123b: *Husain Shahi*, 77; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 16-7; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 145.

[2]Such was the terror of Abdali's invasion in India that it sent a thrill of horror in every part of the country. On this occasion Abdali's presence in the Panjab terrified even Mir Qasim, the British protege in Bihar, who sought the advice of the Governor of Fort William in this matter. *C.P.C.*, I, 1444.

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bring information of their whereabouts. A couple of days later the news was brought to him that the Sikhs were engaged in fighting with Zain Khan near Malerkotla.

Accordingly Ahmad Shah with a light cavalry force, made one of those rapid marches for which he was so celebrated, covering the distance of about 200 kms and crossing two rivers in the course of less than two days. He arrived near Malerkotla early in the morning of the 5th February, 1762,[1] while his courtiers had informed Zain Khan about the Shah's arrival in the night of 4-5 February. The Durrani reconnoitred the situation immediately and formed his plan of action. He divided his army into three parts, one under his personal charge, the other under Shah Vali Khan, and the third under Jahan Khan. The division commanded by Wazir was to join Zain Khan. They were to cover two flanks of the Sikh force, whereas the Shah and Jahan Khan were to turn to the other flanks. Thus the Sikhs were to be attacked on all sides.

The position of the Sikhs was this. Their whole body, including only combatants, numbering about 50,000, lay encamped at village Kup,[2] while their baggage train *(bahir)* consisting of camp equippage, arms, ammunition, stores of provisions, kitchens, servants, women and children, about 5,000, was placed in village 'Pind Garma' only 6 kms distant from their main body. It was, as a rule, guarded by a strong detachment of experienced and veteran soldiers and officers. Slowly in those days did news travel along the rough country roads, and the Sikhs therefore learnt about the Shah's arrival when he had reached Malerkotla. The Sikhs immediately galloped off towards their *bahir*. With a view to stopping their flight Zain Khan pursued them for one and a half kms whereupon the Sikhs came suddenly to a halt and offered a stubborn resistance. Zain Khan's advance-guard under Qasim Khan (our hero of Patti) gave way before the fury of the Sikhs and being repulsed with heavy losses, it ran towards Malerkotla. Another captain, Murtaza Khan stood his ground on a small eminence at the head

[1] *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 16; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 114; Ali-ud-din, 124a. Cf. Rajwade, VI, 465. Miskin, present in the battle, does not give the date of this battle. Forster, I, 319, only mentions the name of the month. I have followed *Khazana-e-Amira*, which places the Durrani-Sikh engagement on 5th February. Sarkar, II, 415.

[2] Kup is a railway station on the Ludhiana-Dhuri line 10 kms north of Malerkotla.

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of 500 horse and foot. The Sikhs then disappeared from sight to Pind Garma.[1]

Just then the red glare of the rising sun and the crimson-coloured uniforms of the Durranis lit up the sky. The Afghans pursued the Sikhs and fell upon them when they were about to enter the village. The Sikhs were seized with a panic. They looked down upon a pitched action and called it a 'half battle'; while '*Dhai Phat*' (fleeing and fighting) was considered as the best mode of warfare.[2]

Accordingly the Sikhs despatched four Sardars[3] to help and guide the baggage train (*bahir*) towards Barnala and organized themselves into a rough sort of solid square, placing each flank under the command of two chiefs. Thus they commenced fighting and moving slowly towards Barnala. They had not gone in this way for more than 10 kms when they learnt that their *bahir* had fallen a prey to an Afghan contingent of 8,000 strong, commanded by Shah Vali Khan. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia immediately despatched a detachment to the rescue of the *bahir*; while their main body continued fighting bravely against the heavy onslaughts of the Durrani. Nothing could surpass the heroic daring, the dogged tenacity, and invincible fortitude of the Sikhs who held themselves with their exposed flanks and open rear. They answered the crushing volleys of the enemy's disciplined fire of *jizairs* and blunderbusses with their matchlocks and swords. The Sikhs were, however, no match for Abdali in generalship. He advanced a strong detachment under Jahan Khan to deliver a fresh attack. This caused some disorder in the main body of the Sikhs. In confusion they galloped onwards. The veteran Durrani naturally took advantage of the little dislocation of their order and massacred large numbers of them. He then aimed at thrusting himself between the main body of the Sikhs and their baggage train. He took four contingents of selected soldiers and made a sudden rush into their ranks at that point. Here again a fierce action took place. The Sikh chiefs, particularly Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Charat Singh Sukarchakia, spurred their horses and bounding over prostrate horses and men came to the succour of

[1]Miskin, 241-2.

[2]Ratan Singh, 380; Gian Singh, 679; Ahmad Shah, 885.

[3]Sanghu Singh of Jassuwala, Alha Singh of Kotkal, Shekhu Singh of Hambalwal and Buddha Singh. Ratan Singh, 445-7; Gian Singh, 817; Karam Singh, 220; *Phulwari*, September, 1928, p. 925; Miskin, 242.

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their brethren who were hard pressed. In answer to the fiercest attack of the Durrani, these Sikh chiefs drew their swords and cut, parried, slashed, thrust, struck, hacked and hewed their enemies and then spurred again to the place where they thought their presence was required. Thus they showed their mettle at the forefront of the battle, with a proud disdain against a horde of filthy plunderers. But ultimately the Durranis were successful and the Sikhs were separated from their *bahir* and the men of the baggage train were mercilessly butchered.[1]

By this time the Sikhs had reached Gahal village, where the surviving men of the *bahir* wanted to take shelter; but the villagers, from fear of the Durrani, shut their doors and gave them no quarters. Consequently some Sikhs hid themselves in heaps of dry dung cakes, hay stacks, fields of wheat, gram and mustard and under the corpses. The main body of the Sikhs continued their retreat, now at a greater speed because they had no baggage train to look after, and before evening reached Qutba village. There was a pond of water where the Durranis rushed to quench their thirst. Some of the Sikhs also drank water there, and then they took advantage of the opportunity and slipped away at a rapid speed towards Barnala.[2]

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Skirmishes continued between the Sikhs and the Afghans, while Ahmad Shah himself kept up the pursuit as far as Barnala, 40 kms from Kup, where he called a halt. Further pursuit was not carried on for several reasons. The sun had set by the time they reached Barnala. His soldiers were already tired of having covered 200 kms in about 36 hours. In the fierce contest with the Sikhs they were exhausted. His own loss during the action in the day was sufficiently considerable to deter him from further pursuit. Besides, the Sikhs had gone pretty far away from the Afghan soldiers, and the Abdali in view of the old tactics of the Sikhs had to think twice before ordering a fresh pursuit. Scarcity of water and the sandy nature of the soil were further impediments. Moreover, the Abdali thought that a slaughter of large numbers of them was a sufficient proof of his strength, which would not enable them to

[1]Ratan Singh, 448-53. (During this struggle several horses under Jassa Singh and Charat Singh were killed and on one occasion Jassa Singh was saved by Gurmukh Singh who gave him his own horse and himself fought on foot.) ibid, 451, 453.

[2]ibid, 454-55.

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rise again. The Sikhs, but for a straggler here and there, were clear of the danger-zone and now they found themselves in the lonely uninhabited desert.

The battle is called by the Sikhs *Ghallughara* or bloody carnage, in which about 20,000 Sikhs lost their lives.[1] The holy *Granth* which was always kept in the Dal Khalsa fell into the hands of the Afghans. It is now kept in the main *Dharamshala* at Kabul.[2]

It may be mentioned that Barnala was a fortified place in the territory of Alha Singh of Patiala. As a matter of fact the retreating Sikh force had gone towards Barnala in the hope of receiving some succour from the Malwa Sikhs. Alha Singh, however, maintained his policy of neutrality even on this occasion. He had already left his headquarters at Patiala for Dhundadhura (Dhandhaota, 27 kms south of Patiala?)

Ahmad Shah Durrani, who was now halting at Sarhind, naturally expected Alha Singh to come and pay him homage. But Alha Singh was hanging between two fires. Should he attend on the Durrani, who had massacred as many as 20,000 of his co-religionists, he would surely invite the wrath of his community. Again, should he abstain from attendance on the Shah, he was sure to lose the favour of his liege lord. He chose the latter course; while the Abdali too took a lenient view of the matter.

Alha Singh's rivals took advantage of his absence and began poisoning the ears of the Durrani. His rising power had naturally excited the jealousy of his neighbours, particularly of the Nawab

[1]The Sikh losses in this battle are variously estimated:—Miskin, 243 (25,000); *Khazana-e-Amira*, 114 (29,000); *Siyar*, III, 74 (20,000); *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 122a (22,000); Husain Shahi, 83 (30,000); Forster, I, 319 (25,000); Malcolm, 98 (upwards of 20,000); *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 17 (30,000); *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 146 (20,000); Ahmad Shah, 885 (17,000); Prinsep, 24 (25 to 30,000), M'Gregor, I, 132 (17,000); Cunningham, 109 (12 to 25,000); Hugel, 271 (20 to 30,000); Ganesh Das, 200 (30,000); Ali-ud-din, 124a (30,000); Ratan Singh, 457, as told by the people (50,000) and as he heard from his father and uncle, present in the battle (30,000); Gian Singh, 327 (13,000); *Shamshir Khalsa*, 112 (10 to 12,000); Karam Singh, 221 (15 to 20,000); Sarkar, II, 486 (10,000).

[2]A Marathi letter written from Shamli 20 days after the battle, reproduced in Rajwade, VI, 465, says that five to seven thousand Sikhs were slain. The real number, however, cannot be ascertained for want of muster rolls and the irregular formation of the Sikh contingents. *Granth Sahib's* two volumes—those of Damdama and Amritsar, are said to have been lost in this action. Cf. Gian Singh, 826 and Karam Singh, in the *Phulwari*, September, 1928, p. 927; Gian Singh Giani, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, (Gurmukhi), Part III, *Raj Khalsa*, 595.

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of Malerkotla, the Rai of Raikot and Lachhmi Narayan, Diwan of Zain Khan. They further misrepresented Alha Singh's attitude towards the Shah by declaring that he had always given secret help to the Majha Sikhs on different occasions.[1]

These misrepresentations and the temptation[2] of a ransom of 50 lakhs from Alha Singh if he were captured, had the desired effect. Abdali stormed his fort of Barnala, set the place on fire and laid waste the entire neighbourhood. Then he advanced on his fort of Dhundadhura, but Alha Singh cleverly managed to give the invader the slip. Alha Singh did not find further retreat of much avail and sought the intervention of Najib-ud-daulah to present himself before the Shah. He was imprisoned and ordered to have his hair cut. Alha Singh was not at all dismayed, and offered to pay for his hair. Ahmad Shah enquired the price and on Alha Singh's volunteering one lakh of rupees, the bargain seems to have been struck at one lakh and twenty-five thousand. An additional sum of 5 lakhs was also realized and an annual tribute was fixed on him, and then, on the recommendation of Shah Vali Khan he was released, though he was detained in his train. Ahmad Shah left Sarhind for Lahore on the 15th February.[3]

Sacred buildings of the Sikhs at Amritsar destroyed

Ahmad Shah, partly in irritation for the troubles the Sikhs had given him in the past and partly from religious bigotry against all infidels, wanted to signalize his march from Sarhind to Lahore. He carried with him 50 cartloads of the heads of the Sikhs slain in the battle, besides a large number of captives.[4] At Amritsar he destroyed the sacred buildings of the Sikhs. He placed boxes full of ammunition under the foundation of the Hari Mandar and it was blown up brick by brick. The other materials were set on fire. The houses around it were pulled down. The sacred reservoir was first defaced and then filled up with the debris of the buildings and

[1]Bute, Shah, 277b-278a; *Tarikh-e-Sidhu*, 76; *Raj Khalsa*, 385.

[2]"Raja Lachhmi Narain of Sarhind, a former servant of our government, is the Diwan of Zain Khan, the Shah's agent and faujdar. He has promised the Shah 50 lakhs of rupees as peshkash and has planned to take him to Alha Jat's garhi." Rajwade, VI, 465.

[3]*Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 171-2; Ali-ud-din, 124b; Miskin, 244; Rajwade, VI, 382; *Delhi Chronicle*, 190.

[4]Khushwaqt Rae; 95; *Gosha-e-Panjab*, 44.

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refuse and was contaminated by slaughtering cows whose blood and entrails were thrown on all sides.[1]

Ahmad Shah reached Lahore on the 3rd March and there erected huge towers with the Sikh heads at the city gates and on the city walls. He also "caused the walls of the principal mosques which had been polluted by the Sicques to be washed with their blood, that the contamination might be removed, and the ignominy offered to the religion of Mahomet, expiated."[2]

Abdali stays in the Panjab upto December, 1762

Adbali stayed in Lahore for nine months,—March to December —to suppress any further rising of the Sikhs. Aiming at killing two birds with one stone, he invited all the Indian potentates to send him their envoys in order to regulate the affairs of Hindustan and to re-organize his financial resources. Najib and Yaqub Ali Khan, the representatives of the Delhi Emperor, were already with him. Bapu and Purushotam Mahadev Hingane, the Maratha ambassadors at Delhi, were addressed three or four letters calling them to Lahore. Bapu joined him about the middle of March and Purushotam in May on obtaining sanction from the Peshwa. His Wazir, Shah Vali Khan, advised the Durrani to open negotiations with the Peshwa on friendly terms and prevailed upon him to recognize the authority of the Peshwa by presenting him through his envoys (accompanied by one ambassador of his own), with "the *tika* of Rajaship, the impression of his palm dipped in saffron (*kesar panja*), robes, jewels, horses and an elephant." (June, 1762)[3]

Najib-ud-daulah and Raza Quli Khan (Munir-ud-daulah) had already been dismissed with the letters of confirmation of Shah Alam as Emperor and Shuja-ud-daulah as Wazir. Then he called upon the various chiefs and zamindars of the Panjab to gather in Lahore. They did so. The Abdali sought their assistance in the

[1]Nur-ud-din, 57a; Forster, I, 320; Malcolm, 98; Khushwaqt Rae, 95; Ratan Singh, 442; Ahmad Shah, 888; *Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan,* 172; Bute Shah, 15a; Ratan Chand, 33; Ganesh Das, 200-201; *Gulzar-e-Shahi*, 525. (Sohan Lal, I, 155 and Gian Singh, 828-9 state that on this occasion Ahmad Shah was hit on the nose by a brick of the Hari Mandar and the festering wound developed into cancer).

[2]*Khazana-e-Amira*, 114; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 122a; Kushwaqt Rae, 95; Forster, I, 320.

[3]*C.P.C.*, 1532; Rajwade, VI, 382, 384, 423, 425; Sarkar, VI, 488.

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extirpation of the Sikhs and settled plans for the future.[1]

Abdali re-conquers Kashmir

By June the Abdali was free from these transactions and the various representatives from different parts of India had taken leave of Ahmad Shah in view of the oppressive heat of the Panjab and the approach of the rainy season. The Durrani decided to utilize this interval in reconquering Kashmir where his Governor Sukhjiwan Mal had thrown off allegiance to him. He invited Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu to Lahore and induced him to lead an expedition into Kashmir under his personal guidance. He was given three to four thousand Durrani troops. Ranjit Dev started in June, but found all the passes closed by Sukhjiwan, and in consequence came back baffled.

Another expedition on a larger scale was fitted later on, probably in September because July and August being the rainiest months allowed no easy approach to the Kashmir valley, as the way to it from Jammu, 320 kms, was cut up with a large number of streams and the rivers Chenab and Jehlam all of which were then in flood. Nur-ud-din was in charge of this undertaking, who with the active assistance of Ranjit Dev succeeded in defeating and capturing Sukhjiwan. Kashmir was then annexed to the Durrani Empire and Nawab Sarbuland Khan appointed its Governor.[2]

Abdali's summer camp at Kalanaur, c. July—August, 1762

After despatching the first expedition to Kashmir Ahmad Shah Abdali did not like to stay in Lahore where the summer heat was becoming rather unbearable for him. He retired to the upper parts of the Bari Doab which possessed a cooler climate and plentiful supplies of grain, grass and game. He set up his summer headquarters at Kalanaur, where Akbar was enthroned in 1556 A.D. about 70 kms north of Amritsar.[3]

Sikhs run to Malwa where they are maltreated by the Brar Jats, c. February—April, 1762

Leaving the Abdali at Kalanaur, let us now turn our attention

[1]Nur-ud-din, 57a; Ahmad Shah, 886.

[2]Rajwade, VI, 384 (Supplement); Kushwaqt Rae, 155; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 115-6; Siyar, III, 74-5; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 122a-b; Ahmad Shah, 886; Ganesh Das, 162-4.

[3]Ahmad Shah, 888; Ali-ud-din, 125b. It was the famous hunting ground of the Mughal Emperors. Adina Beg was so much charmed with the nature of the

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to the Sikhs. After their defeat in their running fight from Kup to Barnala on the 5th February they had escaped to the desert country of Rohi in the course of the following night, and in different groups had taken shelter at Jaitu, Ablumahme, Bhagtu, Ballu, Kawoni, Daurmati, Charak Chabare, Ghoriye, Faridkot and Kangar, etc. Those who had escaped from the battlefield were severely wounded. According to Ratan Singh, "not a single Sikh escaped unhurt and each bore some wounds on his body." Most of them had lost their horses and camels. Nobody was sure of the safety of his family members who had run away in different directions.

The Brar Jats who mostly inhabited the Malwa desert and with whom the Sikhs were in the habit of seeking shelter, treated them cruelly on this occasion, probably fearing to invite hostilities from the Abdali, and drove them away from their villages. We are further given to understand by Ratan Singh, the author of *Prachin Panth Prakash*, that the Sikhs were molested by the Brars in every possible way, the details of which are given on pages from 459 to 464. The Brar Jats were originally Bhatti Rajputs and in former days were a wild and unruly race addicted to cattle-stealing and dacoity [1]

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The Sikh feeling: the alloy is gone and the purified Khalsa remains

The Sikhs having left villages of hostile Brars settled in the neighbourhood of Bhatinda, Kot Kapura and Faridkot. It was not in their nature to submit timidly to tyranny. The savage massacre of the Durrani animated, instead of depressing, their courage. Thus after recent calamities when they gathered in a general body for the first time at Muktsar, a resolution was loudly passed at Holy Tank that in the *Ghallughara* the alloy had been swept off and only the purified Khalsa remained to carry on the work of the Guru,[2] and they must show this to the invader.

The Sikhs were apparently defeated; but a defeat, under certain circumstances, is as honourable as a victory; and on this occasion, the Sikhs, being caught between the jaws of the nutcracker had offered a very stout resistance. They had lost, not because they

country that he founded his new capital at Adina Nagar. Later on Maharajas Ranjit Singh and Sher Singh established their summer capital in the heart of this territory at Batala.

[1] Ratan Singh, 457-60.

[2] *Karam Singh, Phulwari*, September, 1928, p. 927.

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were bad soldiers or there were no good leaders among them, but because their opponents were superior in artillery, which the Sikhs were absolutely without, and they were taken unawares. Besides, they were encumbered with their baggage train in which were their women and children.

These disasters did not lower their spirit, but each success or failure brought them new life, renewed vigour and fresh enthusiasm, as is observed by Malcolm, who says, "The Sikh nation, who have, throughout their early history, always appeared, like a suppressed flame, to rise into higher splendour from every attempt to crush them, had become, while they were oppressed, as formidable for their union, as for their determined courage and unconquerable spirit of resistance."[1]

The Sikhs attack Zain Khan, May, 1762

In May the Sikhs decided to measure swords with Zain Khan, and marching in a strong body, invested Sarhind.[2] In the action that followed they defeated Zain Khan and laid him under heavy tribute. A Marathi letter dated June, 1762 written from Lahore by Bapu, then in attendance upon Ahmad Shah Abdali, to Dada, gives the following details about this campaign:—"I had formerly reported that the Sikhs had caused disturbances in Sarhind District. Recently Zain Khan, the *faujdar* of the place made peace by paying down Rs. 50,000. The Sikhs marched away 30 or 35 kms, when Zain Khan treacherously looted their (rear) baggage. So the Sikhs turned back, plundered the baggage of Zain Khan, looted his Diwan Lachhmi Narayan. Afterwards a (pitched) battle was decided upon. The two sides are fighting at Harnulgarh,[3] 45 kms from Sarhind. Such is the latest news."[4]

Sikhs commence visiting Amritsar, c. August, 1762

Zain Khan's defeat emboldened the Sikhs, the more so because the Abdali had not come to the assistance of his chief on account of the hot weather and flooded rivers. Deciding to take advantage of the hottest and rainiest months, July-August, they increased their depredations and spread disorder and chaos in the country. Ahmad Shah's troops were helpless in pursuing the Sikhs, while the con-

[1]Malcolm, 102-3. Cf. Forster, I, 320. [2]Sarkar, II, 490.
[3]Probably Bahadurgarh, 32 kms south of Sarhind and 8 kms east of Patiala.
[4]Rajwade, VI, 384.

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tingents of the zamindars of the Panjab did not either come to an open engagement with the Sikhs or they were easily defeated and dispersed. Thus the Sikhs grew bolder everywhere and they ventured to visit Amritsar in broad daylight in groups of about one thousand. They also infested the neighbourhood of Lahore and devastated the country all round. Miskin travelled from Sarhind to Sialkot and back, probably in July. He says that the Sikhs were growing stronger while the Afghans were busy in laying the country waste, and dearness of flour prevailed everywhere.[1]

The Durrani is baffled by the Sikhs

Such enterprises of the Sikhs annoyed the Durrani so much that he led expeditions against them himself, but the Sikhs immediately disappeared in the thick forests in the neighbourhood of Amritsar. These tactics embarrassed the Durrani much and he despatched various Afghan chiefs in their pursuit. These detachments utterly failed in checking the disturbances of the Sikhs. If a Sikh was captured in these expeditions and was asked to disarm himself, he boldly refused to do so, loudly announcing that wearing arms was a part of his religion. In order to plague the Abdali further and as a token of resentment at the Abdali's misdeeds in destroying and polluting their sacred buildings at Amritsar, they demolished the Muslim tombs and mausoleums, used mosques as stables for their horses and called the Musalmans and the Durrani by insulting names,[2] such as *malechh*.

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Confusion caused in the country by the Sikhs, c. August, 1762

After the uniform success of their scattered raids, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia decided to lead the entire body of the Dal Khalsa into the Jullundur Doab. They fell upon the villages which had shown a hostile attitude towards them, plundered the people and set fire to their houses. Having acquired an immense booty in the form of money, horses, goods and grain, they retired towards the Malwa desert.

"During the first half of this year (February-June)," says the eye-witness Miskin, "the roads again had become open on all sides, the danger of robbery and fear of highwaymen disappeared

[1] Miskin, 246-7; Ahmad Shah, 887-88 and 983; Sohan Lal, Appendix to I, 19.
[2] Ganesh Das. 201-2.

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from each direction, because Ahmad Shah was staying in Lahore." But from July onward the whole province fell in a state of chaos. As a consequence, the roads to all kinds of traffic and trade became closed and disorder prevailed everywhere in the whole country under the control of the Shah.[1]

Sikhs muster strong in the neighbourhood of Karnal, 25th August-24th September, 1762

It seems probable that the Sikhs retired from the Jullundur Doab in a hurry as Ahmad Shah Abdali lay encamped near by, and crossing the Satluj they marched through Malwa and mustered strong in the neighbourhood of Karnal and Panipat, where they lay encamped for a month, from 25th August to 24th September, 1762.[2] Ahmad Shah Abdali again summoned the agents of the North Indian powers to Lahore, and in response to his call Nawab Ya'qub Ali Khan and Munir-ud-daulah, the envoys of the Delhi Emperor, left Delhi about the middle of September. They had proceeded as far as Panipat when they learnt that the Sikh armies had gathered in the neighbourhood. Consequently they returned to Sonepat.[3]

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Abdali fails in dispersing the Sikhs from Amritsar, 17th Oct., 1762

Leaving Karnal on the 24th September, the Sikhs turned their steps towards Lahore, obviously to celebrate the Diwali festival at Amritsar. By this time Ahmad Shah Abdali had come back to Lahore. It seems probable that in early October the Sikhs appeared in the neighbourhood of Lahore, where they constantly harassed the Shah's troops who were sent out in their pursuit. We are given to understand by Ahmad Shah of Batala that the Sikhs became so bold as to hover round the flanks of the Afghan army within a distance of 6 or 7 kms.

The Sikhs now made up their minds to wash away the blot of their defeat at Kup. The Diwali day, their great festival, was to fall on the 17th October, 1762. Moreover, it was the occasion of the total eclipse of the sun. No better opportunity of fighting with the enemy in order to retrieve the honour of their national character and of

[1]Sohan Lal, I, 158-9; Miskin, 244-7; Sarkar, II, 490-1.
[2]*Delhi Chronicle*, 192.
[3]ibid 192-3. Cf. *Rohtak Gazetteer*, 18.

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laying down their lives in the service of the *Panth* could be expected. The debris of their sacred temple and the sight of the defiled tank roused them to make the highest exertion and to stake their existence in a national cause. The noblest as well as the basest passions of the human soul were closely mingled on this occasion,—the recovery of honour and the wreaking of vengeance. Above all, their recent experience in fighting a pitched battle for the first time had made them conscious of their dormant faculties. So their resolve was made and in a body of 60,000 strong, many of whom bore the scars of the recent struggle, they marched towards Amritsar, where they arrived just a day before the festival "and took an oath to make every effort to cut off the Shah's army" in case of an attack by him[1].

Ahmad Shah was in Lahore, 50 kms south of Amritsar. On this occasion he had not a large army with him, partly because a large force was away to Kashmir where governor Sukhjiwan Mal had thrown off allegiance to him, and partly because after his great victory over the Marathas, the previous year, his prestige had reached its zenith and he considered it enough to strike a terror into the hearts of the Sikhs. Moreover, in case of need he could unhesitatingly call upon his Indian allies, especially the Rohillas, to assist him in any serious undertaking against the Sikhs.

But at this time Ahmad Shah was taken unawares. He could never have dreamt that the Sikhs, upon whom he had inflicted a crushing defeat in the battle of Kup, would be able to recover so soon as to rise in revolt under his very nose when he was still in the Panjab. He was suddenly called upon to face a strong body of the Sikhs at a time when no Indian ally of his was with him, because all of them had left him before the rains. His ranks had thinned as he also had sustained heavy losses in the battle of Kup; while a big gun as Zamzama could not be suddenly brought there. Moreover, he got such a short notice of the intention of the Sikhs that he had no time to summon his lieutenants from Sarhind, Multan and other places in the Panjab. Thus Ahmad Shah was left single-handed with his meagre resources to face the serious menace of the Sikhs.

The Shah knew the weakness of his position and thought of averting this menace by diplomacy. He despatched an ambassador to

[1]Browne, II, 25. (The number of the Sikhs amounting to 60,000 is supplied to us by Forster, I, 322).

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the Sikhs to negotiate for peace, "but on the arrival of this person in the camp of the Sicks, instead of listening to his proposal they plundered him and his followers and drove them away."[1] Finding no chance for a peaceful settlement with the Sikhs Ahmad Shah immediately marched to Amritsar and on the evening of the 16th October encamped close to the town.

The Sikhs drew up their armies early next morning and attacked the enemy so vehemently as not to care at all for their own lives. The Afghans fought with equal valour and energy and displayed strategy under the leadership of the greatest general of Asia of his time; but no amount of war tactics and military science could overcome the frantic enthusiasm evoked by the religious sentiment of sacrifice. The battle raged furiously from early morning till late at night. The enterprise and courage of the Afghans gradually gave way before the astonishing activity and invincible perseverance of the Sikhs. The hostilities were brought to a close on account of the pitch darkness of the moonless night. Both the armies then drew off to their respective camps to take rest for the night; but next morning it was discovered that the Shah had made good his escape to Lahore under cover of darkness.[2]

Fight in the Lakhi Jungle, c. November, 1762

The Sikhs had done their work and achieved their objective in the battle of Amritsar. They had retrieved the loss of their national prestige and honour. Having driven the Abdali back to Lahore, they themselves fled to the Lakhi Jungle, fearing a fresh Afghan attack.

The Durrani expedition to Kashmir was successful, and his contingent returned with flying colours (*c.* November). The representatives of his Indian allies were also pouring into Lahore in the beginning of the cold weather and had gathered in the provincial capital by

[1]Browne, II, 25.

[2]Forster on pp. 321-2 of I, of his *Journey* states that "The records of the Sicques give a relation of a battle fought with the Afghans" which he describes in these words: "This event is said to have happened in October 1762, when the collected body of the Sicque nation, amounting to sixty thousand cavalry had formed a junction at the ruins of Amritsir for the purpose of performing some appointed ceremony, and where they resolved, expecting the attack, to pledge their national existence, on the event of a battle. Ahmed Shah, at that time encamped at Lahore, marched with a strong force to Amritsir, and immediately engaged the Sicques; who, roused by the fury of a desperate revenge, in sight also of the ground sacred to the founders of their religion, whose monuments had

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November. Abdali himself was repenting of his late over-confidence and hasty action. He was anxious for another opportunity to inflict a more crushing defeat on the enemies of his faith and kingdom. Consequently he fitted out another expedition in their pursuit, the account of which as given by Ahmad Yadgar is reproduced below:

"The Shahanshah one day marched towards Lakhi Jungle and Manjha desert on a hunting expedition. He ordered that every Hindu having hair on his head which is the badge of the Sikhs must be slain. On hearing this news the Sikhs fled away and concealed themselves. The triumphing troops were despatched after them. One day a body of the Sikhs appeared on the hunting-ground. A contingent was appointed to capture them. Suddenly another body (of the Sikhs) came there from the other side, and began to fight the Shah's troops. The Durrani Emperor was smoking a hubble-bubble. These wretches blindly came ahead. On approaching nearer one Sikh horseman galloped his horse on the Shah. The valiant king put an arrow in his bow and hit him on the chest in such a way that it passed out through his body. The others were killed by his attendants, eunuchs and *qarawals*, while the rest took to flight."[1]

been destroyed by the enemy they were then to combat, displayed, during a bloody contest, which lasted from the morning until night, an enthusiastic and fierce courage, which ultimately forced Ahmad Shah to draw off his army and retire with precipitation to Lahore." Cf. Browne, II, 25-6; Ali-ud-din, 125-6; *History of the Sikhs*, 98.

Forster, however, doubts the reality of this event when he further writes:—

"Any probability of this event can only be reconciled by a supposition, that the army of Ahmad Shah had suffered some extraordinary reductions, previously to the period in which this occurrence (A total eclipse of the sun is said to have happened on the day of action) is said to have happened.", p. 323.

Malcolm, 100-101, and Sarkar, II, 491, footnote, hesitate to believe the authenticity of this record. But the study of the main trend of Sikh history during our period in general and the events following Ghallughara in particular, coupled with the weak position of the Abdali, on this occasion will convince the reader that the achievement of such a feat by the Sikhs was not outside the range of possibility. After all, world history affords us numerous examples of the miracles wrought by human will power against heavy odds. Shall we lose sight of such a strong factor?

James Browne assigns a later date to this event, but we accept the authority of Forster, who visited the Panjab earlier and whose account of the Sikhs is more exhaustive and critical than that of Browne.

[1]*Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 172-3,

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Ahmad Shah harassed on the Ravi, 12 December, 1762

In the beginning of winter at Abdali's desire, Najib-ud-daulah and Ya'qub Ali Khan from Delhi and Munir-ud-daulah, Agha Raza and Abdul Ahad from the camp of Shah Alam II, had joined him. The Durrani himself recognized Shah Alam as Emperor of Delhi, and promised, in return for a tribute of 40 lakhs a year to be paid by Najib and Munir-ud-daulah on behalf of the Emperor, to lend the support of his name without any armed assistance in compelling the Indian princes to acknowledge the new Emperor's authority.[1]

On concluding this settlement he turned his attention towards the Panjab affairs. Zain Khan was retained in charge of Sarhind province. The title of Raja was conferred upon Ghamand Chand of Kangra and he was confirmed in the administration of the hill territory between the Beas and the Satluj. Jullundur Doab was given to Sa'adat Yar Khan. Murad Khan was installed in the government of the upper Bari Doab with his seat at Batala and Jahan Khan's authority was extended from the Indus to the Ravi in addition to his own province of Peshawar; while Raja Kabuli Mal was given the supreme command of the whole province with a view that he might be able to make peace with the Sikhs.[2]

Some disturbances having broken out in his own dominions of Afghanistan where his presence was immediately required, Ahmad Shah left Lahore for home on the 12th December, 1762.[3]

Ahmad Shah was very much obstructed in the passage of the Ravi. The Sikhs attacked him from such close quarters that "he wondered at their boldness and looked at them in a surprised manner." The Abdali had not gone far, when the Sikhs frightened Kabuli Mal and replanted their military post at Lahore.[4]

[1]Bakhtmal, 99; Sohan Lal, I, 159; Khushwaqt Rae, 95. Kabuli Mal was a Brahman from Kabul; Hugel, 271; but according to the author of *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 60b, he was a Kapur Khatri.

[2]Forster, I, 320; *Delhi Chronicle*, 194.

[3]Ahmad Shah, 895-6.

[4]*Delhi Chronicle*, 194; Sarkar, II, 489.

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CHAPTER 12

The Conquest of Sarhind Province, January, 1763—January, 1764

The exploits of the Sikhs, c. January-March, 1763

On the retirement of the Abdali from the Panjab, the Dal Khalsa came out of the Lakhi Jungle, and created disturbances everywhere. The entire body of the Sikhs fell into two halves. One division, called the Budha Dal (the elder group) under the renowned Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, consisting of six misls—Ahluwalia, Dallewalia, Karorasinghia, Nishanwala, Shahids and Singhpuria—toured over the country, punishing their enemies, replenishing their stores and striking terror into the hearts of the people, so that none might oppose them in future. The other division, known as the Taruna Dal (the younger group), consisting of five misls—Bhangi, Kanhiya, Nakai Ramgarhia, and Sukarchakia, under the leadership of Hari Singh Bhangi, was stationed at Amritsar. They were to carry on the work of digging out and cleansing the Pool of Immortality and doing repairs to their holy buildings.[1]

The Budha Dal then seems to have fallen on Lahore to punish the Afghans and other Muslims who had sided with Ahmad Shah in their massacre and persecution. We reproduce below their doings in the capital of the province, in the words of Forster who visited the Panjab twenty years later: "Soon after the march of Ahmed Shah, the Sicques were seen descending from their various holds on the Panjab, which they rapidly laid waste and after several desultory actions, in which the Afghans were defeated, they besieged, and what seems extraordinary, they took the city of Lahore; where wildly indulging the enmity that had never ceased to inflame them against these severe scourges of their nation, they committed violent outrages. The mosques that had been ever rebuilt or restored to use by the Mahometans, were demolished with every mark of contempt

[1]Miskin, 247; Ratan Singh, 473.

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and indignation: and the Afghans, in chains, washed the foundations with the blood of hogs. They were also compelled to excavate the reservoir at Amrut Sir, which in the preceding year they had filled up. The Sicques, however, keenly actuated by resentment, set a bound to the impulse of revenge; and though the Afghan massacre and persecution must have been deeply imprinted on their minds, they did not, it is said, destroy one prisoner in cold blood."[1] This is corroborated by a Muslim historian: "When the exalted Shah returned that progressive sect came out from forests and mountains and busied themselves in plundering the property of the Muslims, turned their mosques and monasteries into the stables for their horses and stopped the Islamic practices as '*azan*,' etc. in the Muslim villages and subjected them to a great persecution."[2]

Sack of Kasur, c. May, 1763

The whole body of the Sikhs gathered together at Amritsar to celebrate the Baisakhi festival which fell on the 10th April, 1763. At Amritsar some Brahmans of Kasur came and made a bitter complaint against the treatment of the Hindus by the Afghans of Kasur with particular reference to Usman Khan who had seized the beautiful wife of one of them and converted her to Islam.[3]

Hari Singh Bhangi, the head of the *Taruna Dal*, at once accorded assent to help the Brahmans. He was opposed by others on several grounds The Pathans were very powerful; their twelve[4] forts were full of arms and ammunition; they would be joined by the other Afghans. But Hari Singh was firm. After some time Charat Singh also supported him, but proposed to take an augury from their sacred *Granth*. The Book was opened at random, the lines at the top were read which urged every one to keep his word.[5]

Consequently the Taruna Dal marched from Amritsar. At every

[1]Forster, I, 321. [2]*Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 173.

[3]Bute Shah, 223a: Ratan Singh, 473-4; Gian Singh, 797-8.

[4]The town of Kasur was an aggregate of fortified villages, each forming a separate *Kot* or fort and having a different name:

(1) Kot Khwajah Husain Khan; (2) Kot Khwajah Ghulam Muhiy-ud-din; (3) Kot Usman Khan; (4) Kot Badar-ud-din Khan; (5) Pir-da-kot; (6) Kot Murad Khan; (7) Kot Garhi; (8) Kachcha Kot; (9) Kot Rukan-ud-din Khan; (10) Kot Halim Khan; (11) Kot Azam Khan; (12) Kot Baha-ud-din Khan.

Punjab Notes and Queries, May, 1884, p. 91; October, 1885, p. 8. These names slightly differ from those given in *Lahore District Gazetteer*, p. 196.

[5]Ratan Singh 476; Gian Singh, 802.

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stage they were joined by fresh recruits, and by the time they reached Kasur their number had swollen to 24,000. Some of the scouts of the Sikhs had advanced to Kasur in the disguise of shopkeepers and merchants and brought the news that the whole town was unaware of the movements and intentions of the Sikhs. They were further informed that the Afghans spent their day in underground cells on account of the intensity of heat of May. The Sikhs made their way into the town at midday and took the people by surprise.

The Sikhs placed their own watchmen at the gates which they closed, and the means of communication being entirely cut off the Sikhs gave the town up to wholesale plunder. Usman Khan with 500 of his followers was slain, and the Brahman lady was restored to her real husband. The head of the Pathan chiefs, Ghulam Muhiyud-din Khan, died fighting. His nephew Hamid Khan fell at the feet of Sardar Jhanda Singh and begged for his life on the payment of four lakhs of rupees. The city was sacked and burnt. Such large quantities of gold, silver, ornaments, jewels and pearls, etc. fell into their hands that all became rich.[1] It is said that Jassa Singh Ramgarhia got so much gold, ornaments, jewels and pearls that they were carried by four strong men on a large bedstead. This treasure was buried by him in the forest near Amritsar, but he missed the place later on and lost it for ever.

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The Ramgarhia and Kanhiya Misls worked together and shared all their booty equally. On this occasion, however, Jassa Singh kept the whole loot for himself, and as a consequence ill-feelings arose between the two chiefs.

The Jullundur Doab is run over, c. June, 1763

We have mentioned that only five misls known as the *Taruna Dal* had come to Kasur. The other six misls (the *Budha Dal*) under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia marched towards the east, and crossing the river Beas entered the Jullundur Doab then held by Saadat Yar Khan. The Governor was so much terrified that he did not stir out of his capital, though the Sikhs laid waste the very suburbs of Jullundur. The people shut themselves up inside the walls of their villages and towns. The Sikhs now seized their old possessions and spent the *Chaumasa* (June-September, the four months of the rainy season) in consolidating their territories and acquiring more in their neigh-

[1] Bute Shah, 223a; Ahmad Shah, 491-92; Ratan Singh, 483; Gian Singh, 805.

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bourhood.[1]

Jahan Khan is defeated on the Chenab, middle of November, 1763

On the approach of the Diwali festival (4th November) the Sikhs began to pour into Amritsar from all parts of the country. They had cleaned the tank in order to enable themselves to take a bath, but the construction of the Hari Mandar was postponed in view of the impending invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani.

They were busy in their festivities when the news was brought to them that Jahan Khan, commander-in-chief of Ahmad Shah Durrani, had left Peshawar and was crossing the Indus at Attock. The Sikhs got ready to oppose the invader and marched to meet him on the way. Jahan Khan had just crossed the Chenab at Wazirabad when the Sikhs fell upon him and gave him a crushing defeat, about the middle of November, 1763.

He fled to Sialkot and shut himself up in the fort. The Sikhs besieged the place, and skirmishes commenced. In one day's fight Jahan Khan's horse was shot dead and its rider fell on the ground. The Sikhs unanimously shouted the name of their Guru and raised cries, "We have killed Jahānā (Jahan Khan)." Then all of them at once pulled out their swords from the scabbards and fell upon the enemy. The Afghans left the field. Jahan Khan fled to Peshawar, while a large number of his troops were slaughtered. The entire camp of Jahan Khan fell into the hands of the victors; and as the Sikhs of those days entirely abstained from the fair sex, they safely conveyed his family to Jammu.[2]

Malerkotla is laid waste, c. December, 1763

The Sikhs came back to Amritsar by the end of November and stayed there for some days in performing thanksgiving ceremonies. At this time some of their coreligionists came to them from Malwa, proposing an attack on Malerkotla for the treacheries of the Nawab against the Khalsa. The matter was discussed at length and a *Gurmata* was passed in favour of the proposal.[3]

[1]Bakhtmal, 99; Sohan Lal, I. 160; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 107.

[2]Ahmad Shah, 964-5; Sohan Lal, Appendix to I, 13-4; II, 11; Ali-ud-din, 127b-128a; Ganesh Das, 203-4.

The news of Jahan Khan's defeat arrived at Delhi on the 11th December, 1763. *Cf. Delhi Chronicle*, 198.

[3]Ratan Singh, 467.

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The Sikhs marched to the Malwa country in a strong body under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, suddenly appeared under the walls of Malerkotla and laid siege to the place. Bhikhan Khan boldly came out with a small number of horse and foot and fell upon the Sikhs. He was hit by a bullet in the chest and instantly fell dead on the spot. Maler was for the second time given up to plunder. The town was razed to the ground and a great booty fell into the hands of the victors.[1]

Plunder and massacre of Morandah, c. early January, 1764

After the destruction of Malerkotla the Sikhs looked for some more adventure. Some one suggested that they should punish Gangu Brahman of Kheri and Jani and Mani Ranghars[2] of Morandah for their treachery in handing over Mata Gujri, the mother of Guru Gobind Singh and his two little sons to the Governor of Sarhind. An assembly of the chiefs was called to decide. Dal Singh and Ran Singh of Gharuan village and the Sikhs of Salaundi village pressed the Dal to punish the traitors. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was not prepared to accept such proposals, because he feared that Zain Khan of Sarhind in whose territory these villages were situated would come to the help of his subjects, and in that case they might not be able to achieve their object. But the majority were in favour of the expedition and so Jassa Singh yielded.

To begin with, they marched against Kheri, besieged the village, hunted for Gangu Brahman and his family, and put all of them to sword. Then they turned their attention towards Morandah (called also Baghanwala) and despatched their scouts ahead. When these Sikhs approached the village the Ranghars greeted them disdainfully and cracked jokes and passed taunts on them[3]. But when they learnt that the whole Khalsa Dal was marching after them they entered the town panic-stricken, shut the gates and took shelter behind the wall and the ditch

Charat Singh posted his troops on the way leading to Sarhind in

[1]Bakhtmal, 99-100. Cf. *Gosha-e-Panjab*, 80: Browne, 11, 24; Sohan Lal, I, 160-1.

[2]"The original issues of Rajput mothers and Musalman fathers are termed Ranghar. These intermarry. But if Ranghars marry out of their castes they become sub-Ranghar. There is a body of Hindu Ranghars too, the original issues of Rajput fathers and Musalman women, and sub-Ranghar similarly created." *Punjab Notes and Queries*, May, 1884, p. 90.

[3]For details *see* Ratan Singh, 467-8; Gian Singh, 832.

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order to check any reinforcements coming from that side; while the other Sikhs got into the ditch and scaled the wall. A number of them belonging to the Misl of Tara Singh got inside the town and threw open the gates after cutting down the guards, thus admitting the rest of the Dal. The Sikhs of Gharuan village led the attack, as they were quite familiar with the people and their houses. They made straight for the house of Jani Khan and Mani Khan, who, together with other members of their family were put to death. Then began the massacre of the inhabitants and nobody except women, children, the aged and the Hindus was spared.

Another town in the neighbourhood named Korali was invaded next because this place belonged to the relations of the Ranghars of Morandah. Moreover Zain Khan's Diwan Lachhmi Narayan, who was on tour collecting revenues, was staying at Korali. The Sikhs fell upon the village and robbed the Diwan of all his treasure.

Zain Khan was in his capital and the news of the Sikh depredations had reached him. But he was so much terrified that he did not stir out of the place. Realizing that the Sikhs would ultimately invade his capital, he opened negotiations with Alha Singh of Patiala asking him to persuade the Sikhs to retire from his country on receiving *jagirs* for their decent livelihood. Alha Singh deputed his agent Nanu Singh Grewal to the Sikh chiefs, who proudly turned down all the terms of peace, declaring, "We are Singhs and Zain Khan is a Turk, and it is impossible for both of us to be united. Sat Guru himself has granted us kingship and we are winning it by sacrificing our heads."[1]

Fall of Sarhind, 14th January, 1764

The Majha Jats, almost to a man, had embraced Sikhism. Now it was the turn of the Malwa Jats. The bright view of acquiring a rich booty drew to the fold of Sikhism thousands of the Jat peasantry of Sarhind province. Alha Singh with his Phulkian contingent had also agreed to join the Majha Sikhs in this expedition. The total strength of the Dal Khalsa present at the siege of Sarhind is computed at 50,000.[2] Zain Khan's position, on the other hand, had been deteriorating for some time past. Like all other Afghans, he possessed no administrative capacity or uprightness of character. The eye-witness Miskin who had left Zain Khan's service only a year ago, writes:

[1]Ratan Singh, 467-73; Gian Singh, 832-4.
[2]Gian Singh, 841.

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"The manner of the government of Sardar Zain Khan had changed. He departed from his former character and rules of conduct. He stopped paying salaries to his revenue officials and soldiers. He commenced plundering the villages of his districts indiscriminately and gave a portion of the booty to his servants in payment of their arrears, though not amounting even to one-fourth of their dues. In alliance with the hill-Rajahs he became anxious to amass a fortune." The result of this maladministration was that his starving lieutenants and soldiers began to abandon his service and went to Najib-ud-daulah in the Ganga Doab in search of bread. Miskin was so much disappointed with Zain Khan's greed and misrule that he left him early in 1763. So had done his two other officers Qasim Khan and Murtaza Khan Bharech.[1]

Zain Khan had realized that the time for the final struggle with the Sikhs had come. He was depressed because he could not expect any help from any quarter. Ahmad Shah Durrani was at Kandhar, and he could not be called so soon; while his friend the Nawab of Malerkotla was dead. Saadat Yar Khan in the Jullundur Doab commanded no good troops. The local chiefs of some importance were hostile to him for his high-handedness. Kabuli Mal the Lahore *subahdar* was like a bird without wings on account of his poor resources. Thus Zain Khan, entirely left to his own resources, had to combat the bold, proud and courageous Sikhs, superior in numbers, single-handed.

The Sikhs lay encamped in three divisions. The six misls of the Budha Dal under Jassa Singh were stationed at Bhaganpur, while the other five misls (Taruna Dal) were at Panja and the Phulkian misl was still at Patiala. Zain Khan was informed of this situation and he determined to take advantage of their scattered forces. One night he suddenly issued out of Sarhind and attacked the Taruna Dal near a village named Pir Zain Khan Munayra (12 kms east of Sarhind).

Luckily the Sikhs had decided the preceding evening to make a united attack on Sarhind, and all the three sections of them were already on the move from their encampments. The news of Zain Khan's attack was immediately conveyed to the other two bodies and in a short time they surrounded Zain Khan on all sides, cutting off all his ways of escape. Zain Khan was thus caught between the jaws of a nutcracker, as the Sikhs had been two years previously.

Zain Khan was forced to fight and he found himself unable to

[1]Miskin, 250, 263; Sarkar, II, 491-2.

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cope with the situation. He maintained his position in the night, and in the early hours of the morning he began to send out his detachments with guns, swivels and matchlocks with a view to diverting the attention of the Sikhs towards them, so that he might find time to escape. He was partially successful in his plans because the Taruna Dal actually fell upon the baggage and busied themselves in plunder. But the Budha Dal under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia besieged him while he had gone only a little farther.[1]

Zain Khan evaded his besiegers for some time more, but in his atetmpt to escape he was shot dead. His Afghan troops fled in all directions in a state of panic. They were hotly pursued and cut to pieces indiscriminately. Thus the Sikhs achieved this grand success quite unexpectedly, because they had not come to this side for this purpose. This event is said to have taken place on the 4th Magh Samvat 1820 (14th January, 1764).[2]

The Sikhs then rushed to the town of Sarhind and captured it after a short resistance on the part of the garrison. They closed the gates and barred all the ways of escape. Each house was taken possession of by a number of Sikhs. The people were stripped of their cash, gold, silver and ornaments; the floors were dug up and the ceilings broken in search of hoarded treasure and all the male persons with the exception of children, the aged and Hindus were put to the sword. A portion of the city was set on fire while most of the houses were razed to the ground.

Then they made for the fort, pulled down the walls in which the the Guru's sons were bricked up alive. They erected a platform at that particular place where the Guru's sons were beheaded and a *Granthi* (priest) was posted to recite the holy Granth. Then a *Gurdwara* (temple) was built on this spot, and it was named Fatahgarh.[3]

Partition of Sarhind territory, January-February, 1764

On the fall of Zain Khan the territory of Sarhind,[4] a vast tract of

[1]Ratan Singh, 482-5.

[2]All the recent Panjab historians place the fall of Sarhind in December, 1763. In the absence of any other contemporary authority, I follow Ratan Singh whose father was present on this occasion, and whose chronology is mostly accurate. *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 501.

[3]Miskin, 263; *Chahar Gulzar Shujai*, 531b; Browne, II, 24; Bakhtmal, 100; Sohan Lal, I, 161; Ratan Singh, 499-506; Ali-ud-din, 126 a, Gian Singh, 841-52.

[4]The contempt of the Sikhs against the city can be imagined by the practice

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plain country, 350 kms long and 250 kms wide extending from the Sarmur hills and the Jamuna in the east to the borders of Rajasthan in the west, and from the river Satluj in the north to Panipat in the south, worth fifty-two lakhs of rupees annually, fell into the hands of the Sikhs. The noted Sikh chiefs who commanded sub-contingents of troops under a Misldar at once dispersed in various directions and according to their strength seized what fell in the way of each. They would demand from the headman of the village either some money or some rough sugar (*gur* or *shakkar*) or loaves of bread, in token of submission, and on leaving some of these tokens with one or more of their followers in each village, they would hurry on to the next. "Tradition still describes how the Sikhs dispersed as soon as the battle was won, and how, riding day and night, each horseman would throw his belt and scabbard, his articles of dress and accoutrement, until he was almost naked, into successive villages to mark them as his."[1]

To understand how this territory fell into the hands of the Sikhs without a blow after Zain Khan's defeat, two essential features are to be grasped. The first point is the geographical position. Hemmed in on one side by the hills and on the other by the great jungle tract bordering on Rajasthan desert, the Sarhind division was then central spot through which every horde of invaders was bound to pass on the way to the battleground of India at Panipat, with Delhi as its ultimate goal. Therefore it was for long destined to feel the effect of every important campaign in Northern India. Consequently the people of this tract, particularly along the track followed by the successive invaders, were so much ground down that they lost all power of resistance to difficulty, and they inherited an attitude of submission to the inevitable.[2]

which lasted until the close of the nineteenth century. It was considered a most meritorious action for a Sikh to tear out three bricks from some detached piece of wall yet standing and throw them into the Satluj or the Jamuna, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the last Guru that "the city of Sarhind will be destroyed to its foundation and its bricks will fall into the Satluj." The Maharajah of Patiala sold the debris of Sarhind to the North-Western Railway Company in 1867 AD and the bricks were consequently taken across the Satluj to be used for metalling the road. Gian Singh, 850; *History of the Panjab*, anonymous. I, 221; Hugel, 271.

[1]Ali-ud-din, 126a, 179b; Ratan Chand, 34-35; Cunningham, 110; *Chahar Gulzar Shujai*, 499b; Ahmad Shah, 896; *Tarikh-e-Sidhu*, 128.

[2]Cf. *Chiefs and Families of Note*, 1892, p. 208; *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, Punjab, I, 321.

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The Sikhs on the other hand had already stirred the minds of the people of this territory. The first direct experience of the inhabitants was in the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur who frequently toured from his headquarters at Makhowal in the Rupnagar District, a few kilometres north of the Satluj, through the country recruiting his disciples. His son and successor Guru Gobind Singh established his intimate contact with the whole region from the Satluj to the Jamuna along the foot of the hills. Guru Gobind Singh fought with hill Rajas and Mughals many battles here. The enemy forces created awe and fear in the minds of the people. A little later on Banda displayed his valorous deeds in this tract. He also built his fort of Lohgarh near Sadhaura and by splendid and uniform victories cowed down the people so much that even a sweeper belonging to his army and coming back to his own home with a letter of authority from Banda was hailed as a ruler without the slightest resistance. Thus we can account for the easy occupation of this large tract so speedily that most of these Sikhs found themselves in a position to cross over the Jamuna to raid the Saharanpur District only a month after the fall of Sarhind.

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Distribution of territories

It must be borne in mind that only eight misls, *viz.*, Ahluwalia, Bhangi, Dallewalia, Karorasinghia, Nishanwala, Phulkian, Shahid and Singhpuria participated in this partition. The remaining four, *i.e.*, Kanhiya, Nakai, Ramgarhia and Sukarchakia excluded themselves from these possessions simply because their eyes were fixed on the territories in the Jullundur, Bari, Rechna, Chaj and Sind Sagar Doabs. The Bhangi Misl was the strongest of all these Misls at this time and it included as many big chiefs in it as did all the rest of the Sikh misls. Therefore its Sardars aimed at gaining territories in every part of the country.

The following chiefs acquired territories mentioned against their names:

1. *Bhai Budha Singh*: Bhai Budha Singh, a noted Sikh chief of Jhambowal, was granted by the unanimous vote of the whole Sikh body *(Sarbat Khalsa)*, the town of Sarhind including its neighbourhood. But this town was very much coveted by Alha Singh, because it was in the close vicinity of his capital (Patiala) and the possession of the old, famous town was sure to enhance his prestige. Consequently, he opened negotiations with Budha Singh through Gur-

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bakhsh Singh, a nephew of Nawab Kapur Singh, and persuaded him to make over his newly acquired possessions in exchange for Adampur and seven other productive villages. Alha Singh[1] also paid Rs. 25,000 to the Sikhs for *karah prashad* (consecrated food). Budha Singh seized twenty-eight villages more in the Abohar *ilaka* where his famity is still represented.[2]

2. *Nodh Singh Nishanwala.* Chunya Singh was a Jat of Ajnala in Amritsar district. He had four sons, Indar Sain, Chandar Sain, Bhima Sain and Mast Singh. Sardar Indar Sain married by '*Chadarandazi*' a beautiful woman named Mai Dharmon who gave birth to a son named Nodh Singh. This Nodh Singh was present at the battle of Sarhind in which he was wounded by a bullet. As he could not move farther he seized Kheri, the richest *parganah* of Ludhiana district, in the close vicinity of Sarhind which was worth Rs. 25,000 a year. He built a small fort at this place and resided there.[3]

3. *Dharam Singh.* Dharam Singh was a cousin of the celebrated Tara Singh Ghaiba. He captured a cluster of villages and founded Dharamsinghwala in the centre where he eventually settled down. His family still resides at this place.[4]

4. *Sudha Singh Bajwa Nishanwala.* Sudha Singh Bajwa seized Machhiwara and the eastern portions of the Utalan *parganah.*[5]

5. *Rae Singh.* Rae Singh, a Kang Jat of Amritsar, secured sixteen villages to the south-west of Khanna in Samralah *Tahsil* of Ludhiana district. His descendants still hold *Jagir* at Dhirumazra and Jhabumazra.[6]

6. *Rae Singh Karorasinghia.* This Rae Singh was the son of the celebrated Mahtab Singh who had boldly killed Massa Ranghar, the collector of Amritsar. He was a member of the Karorasinghia Misl and had impressed his leader Sham Singh so much that the latter married his daughter to him. He seized a group of several villages

[1]It was on the 12th February, 1764, after one month of the conquest of Sarhind that Alha Singh laid the foundation of a strong fortress in his capital at Patiala, in order to make it as great and beautiful as Sarhind. (Karam Singh, 228).

[2]Ali-ud-din, 126a; Ratan Singh, 506; Sarup Lal's *Tarikh-e-Sikhan*, 3-4; *Dastur-ul-'Amal.*, 249-50, 253; *Gosha-e-Panjab*, 45; *Chiefs and Families of Note*, 280-2.

[3]*Gosha-e-Panjab*, 24-6.

[4]*Chiefs and Families of Note*, 280-2.

[5]*Ludhiana Settlement Report*, 1878, p. 27 and *Ludhiana Gazetteer*, 1888-89, p. 24.

[6]*Chiefs and Families of Note*, 257; *Ludhiana Gazetteer*, 1888-9, p. 109.

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in Samralah Tahsil where his descendants still reside at Bhari and Kotla Badla. Ratan Singh, our valuable writer of *Panth Prakash*, was his son.[1]

7. *Sujan Singh Dallewalia*. Sujan Singh, Man Singh and Dan Singh were the sons of Amrik Singh, a Badecha Jat, of the village Dhianpur in Amritsar district, who, later on, had settled at Kang. They were the members of the Dallewalia Misl and had seized the *parganahs* of Dharmkot and Tihara to the south of the Satluj. The descendants of Sujan Singh and Dan Singh still hold *Jagirs* at Shahkot and those of Man Singh at Dhondowal.[2]

8. *Kaur Singh Dallewalia*. Kaur Singh and Dharam Singh Jats of Kang were the cousins of Tara Singh Ghaiba of the Dallewalia Misl. Kaur Singh occupied a number of villages round about Kang, while Lohian fell to the share of his brother. Kaur Singh's family is still represented at Kang.[3]

9. *Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the chief leader of the Dal Khalsa and the founder of Kapurthala State, who also commanded his own contingent of 10,000 horse, captured the territories of Jagraon, Bharog, Fatahgarh all worth two lakhs a year.[4] Mirza Singh of Sultanwind, a village near Amritsar, was a servant of Sardar Jassa Singh and his uncle Hakumat Singh was a horseman. Jassa Singh left Hakumat Singh as his *thanadar* in Bharog (103 villages), and Mirza Singh in Fatahgarh.[5]

10. *Saundha Singh Dallewalia*. Saundha Singh, a Jat of Narowal near Amritsar, was a member of the Dallewalia Misl and acquired the estate of Khanna in Ludhiana district, worth Rs. 30,000.[6]

11. *Dasaundha Singh Nishanwala*. Dasaundha Singh was a Gil Jat, son of Chaudhari Sahib Rae of village Mansur in the Firozpur district. He was the chief leader of the Nishanwala Misl and commanded 12,000 horse. He took possession of the *ilakas* of Singhanwala, Sanahwal, Sarai Lashkari Khan, Doraha, Sonti, Amloh, Zira, Ludhar and Ambala and made the last named place his headquarters. On his death he was succeeded by his younger brother

[1] *Chiefs and Families of Note*, 262-3.
[2] ibid, 304-5.
[3] ibid, 306-7.
[4] Ali-ud-din, 126b: *Dastur-ul-Amal*, 45-6; *Raj Khalsa*, 375.
[5] *Punjab Government Records*, Selections from Notebook kept by Captain G. Birch, 1818-1821, IX, no. 17, p. 129.
[6] Sarup Lal, *Tarikh-e-Sikhan*, 147; *Jullundur Settlement Report*, 1892, p. 37.

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Sangat Singh.[1]

12. *Jai Singh Nishanwala.* Jai Singh, a Gurm Jat of village Karanke Dhirke near Atari, was a member of the Nishanwala Misl. He seized twenty-seven villages in the *parganah* of Lidhran and seven in Kharar yielding about Rs. 60,000 per annum.[2]

13. *Nahar Singh and Surjan Singh.* Nahar Singh and Surjan Singh Sodhis acquired the *ilaka* of Anandpur and Makhowal worth three lakhs a year.[3]

14. *Hari Singh Dallewalia.* Hari Singh, a Birk Jat of Kaleki near Kasur, was a noted member of the Dallewalia Misl. He seized the territories of Rupar, Sialba, Awankot, Siswan and Korali. He also captured the fort of Khizarabad built by Chaudhari Tek Chand.[4]

15. *Khushhal Singh Singhpuria.* Khushhal Singh Singhpuria, the nephew of the famous Nawab Kapur Singh of Faizullahpur, the founder of the Singhpuria Misl, had succeeded to the leadership of the confederacy in 1753 on the death of the Nawab. He already owned a territory worth three lakhs a year and at this time he occupied the *parganahs* of Chhat, Banur, Manauli, Ghanauli, Bharatgarh, Kandaulah, Bunga, Bhareli and Chune Machhli fetching him another one lakh and a half annually.[5]

16. Jai Singh, Ram Singh, Sardha Singh, Sahib Singh, Bakht Singh, Kanwar Singh and Mathan Singh of village Kang and members of the Dallewalia Misl took possession of the *parganah* of Kahmanon, consisting of fifty-five villages. These seven chiefs commanded a contingent of 126 soldiers and dividing the *parganah* into three parts, set themselves up as independent chiefs.[6]

17. *Karam Singh Shahid.* Karam Singh was a Sidhu Jat of village Mahraka, 35 kms westward of Lahore. He took possession of a number of villages in the *parganahs* of Shahzadpur and Kesari in Ambala district yielding about one lakh a year. He seized a

[1]*Raj Khalsa,* 50-1; Sarup Lal, *Tarikh-e-Sikhan,* 51; Ganesh Das, 206; Bute Shah, 266b-267a and 274b-275a.

[2]*Rajas of the Punjab,* 45; *Ludhiana Gazetteer,* 1888-89, p. 108; *Chiefs and Families of Note,* 251.

[3]Sarup Lal, *Tarikh-e-Sikhan,* 150.

[4]Kushwaqt Rae, 187; Ali-ud-din, 126a; Sarup Lal, 32-35; *Dastur-ul-Amal,* 96; *Jullundur Settlement Report,* 1892, 37-8. (This Hari Singh had run away with Rajan, the widowed sister-in-law of Chuharmal, the Phagwara Chaudhari, an adventure till recently the subject of popular song.) Bute Shah, 250b.

[5]*Raj Khalsa,* 48; Sarup Lal, 7, 409; Ali-ud-din, 126b.

[6]Bute Shah, 258b.

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Jhabhal situated, 20 kms west of Amritsar, seized Khurdin, Kinori, Jamaitgarh and Chhalondi (his headquarters) yielding three lakhs annually.[1]

28. *Acquisitions of the Phulkian Rajas.* Alha Singh seized the territories of Pail, Basi, Latbara and Isru.[2] Hamir Singh of Nabha captured the *parganahs* of Bhādson, Amloh, Wirro and Bhagsu.[3] Man Singh took possession of Malod,[4] while Gajpat[5] Singh acquired Safidon, Panipat, Karnal, Rohtak and Bazidpur.[6]

29. *Jiwan Mal.* Jiwan Mal was a Sodhi Khatri, seventh in descent from the fourth Guru Ram Das. He came in the tahsil Muktsar of Faridkot district and took into his possession a large area generally lying waste and established a number of villages. The *ilaka* was named by him Guru Har Sahai after the name of his eldest son. His descendants still retain *Jagir* in this territory.[7]

30. *Sawan Singh.* Sawan Singh was a cousin of the famous Dasaundha Singh and Sangat Singh of the Nishanwala Misl. He appropriated to himself several villages around Sonti where he settled down. His family is still represented at Mansurwal in Firozpur district.[8]

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31. *Gujar Singh Bhangi.* Gujar Singh Bhangi with his brother Nusbaha Singh and his two nephews Gurbakhsh Singh and Mastan Singh took possession of Firozpur, while Jai Singh Gharia with another band from the same quarters seized Khai, Wan and Bajidpur in the neighbourhood of Firozpur and made them over to their subordinates. The Firozpur territory then contained thirty-

[1]Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash,* 1st edition, Wazir-e-Hind Press, Amritsar, 539; *Raj Khalsa*, 33. [The possessions of the Rajas of Ladwa and the Sardars of Thaneswar were originally a part of the *Subah* of Delhi. The present *talukas* of Narwana and Jind were *parganahs* in the Sarkar of Hissar. Safidon was a *parganah* in the Sarkar of Delhi. Indri was in the Sarkar of Saharanpur that extended to Jamuna, which in former days ran under the present western high bank of the canal. Thaneswar and Shahabad were royal *parganahs* in the Sarkar of Sarhind, as were Samana and Sunam.] *Karnal Gazetteer*, 40.

[2]Gian Singh, 852.

[3]ibid, 852; *Raj Khalsa*, 466.

[4]Gian Singh, 852.

[5]Khushwaqt Rae, 175.

[6]Gian Singh, 852; *Karnal Gazetteer,* 33; *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab,* I, 316.

[7]*Chiefs and Families of Note*, 273-4.

[8]ibid, 286.

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seven villages.[1]

32. *Tara Singh Ghaiba.* Tara Singh Ghaiba, a prominent leader of the Dallewalia Misl, extended his conquests as far as Ramuwala and Mari in the Moga tahsil at both of which places he built forts.

Non-Sikh possessions

Mixed up among these Sikh estates lay some Muslim and Hindu territories, the owners of which saved themselves by coalescing with the powerful Sikh leaders of their neighbourhood and paying them tribute.[2] Rae Kalha III of Raikot retained most of the Ludhiana and Jagraon tahsils and also a large portion of the Firozpur district.[3] The Afghan colonies of Kunjpura consisting of 53 villages worth half a lakh a year, Malerkotla containing 96 villages yielding one lakh annually,[4] Mamdot, and Kotla Nihang near Rupar, also maintained their independence.[5]

Gharib Das, a Hindu chief, seized a group of 84 villages in the *parganahs* of Mani Majra and Mullanpur which were held by his father Ganga Ram as revenue officer. Mani Majra became the capital of the new principality which he further extended by the capture of the fort of Pinjor situated in a lovely garden at the foot of the Shiwalik hills.[6]

[1] *Ferozepur Gazetteer*, 16.

[2] Cf. Ratan Singh, 509.

[3] *Ludhiana Gazetteer*, 1888-89, p. 112; *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab*, I, p. 426.

[4] *Calcutta Review*, II, October-December, 1844, p. 200.

[5] Sarup Lal, 129, 134, 135, 136; Ali-ud-din, 126a

[6] Pinjor later on served as an encamping ground of the Governors-General of India on their way to Simla and back from 1827 till the construction of the Kalka-Simla Railway. *Dastur-ul-Amal*, 302; *Ambala Gazetteer*, 78.

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CHAPTER 13

The Sikh Molestation of the Durrani, February, 1764—March, 1765

The Sikhs intimidate Kabuli Mal, the Lahore Governor, c. February, 1764

After the campaign of Sarhind the Taruna Dal consisting of the Sukarchakia, Nakai, Kanhiya, Ramgarhia and Bhangi Misls turned back to the Panjab, desiring to push their conquests in the west. On their approach the Afghan Governor of Jullundur, who had already been terrified by the defeat and death of Zain Khan, took to flight. The Sikhs plundered some of the places, acquired new possessions and then marched upon Lahore.

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They seized the neighbouring villages, besieged the city, cut off all supplies and demanded the immediate death of all the cow-killing butchers of the city and to stop this practice in future. Kabuli Mal begged to be excused, saying—"I am a servant of a Muslim king and such a course will involve me in the royal wrath." Being terrified he closed all the gates of the city with bricks, keeping open only two for conducting business. The Sikhs then broke through the Delhi Gate and set to plundering the city. Finding the town and himself in danger, Kabuli Mal yielded, cut off the noses, ears and hands of some butchers, banished them from the city, paid a large sum to the Sikhs and thus saved his capital.[1] Hari Singh Bhangi left his nominee Tek Chand as a resident in the court of Lahore, who practically directed Kabuli Mal in the administrative work and received an allowance of Rs. 10 per day from the government treasury. This took place in February, 1764.

By this time Sobha Singh had also securely established himself in the *parganah* of Niaz Beg (12 kms south of Lahore) and used to plunder all the goods passing that way. Kabuli Mal tried to save

[1] Ali-ud-din, 126b.

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the merchants and invited an agent of Sobha Singh to sit at the octroi office outside the Shahalmi Gate and receive the customs duty on all goods coming from the side of Multan.[1]

Charat Singh takes Rohtas

The Taruna Dal was further sub-divided into two parts under its two prominent leaders. Charat Singh marched to the north-west, while Hari Singh Bhangi advanced towards Multan. Charat Singh Sukarchakia trod the Rechna and Chaj Doabs under his feet and then laid siege to the famous fort of Rohtas. It was in the charge of Sarfaraz Khan,[2] the commandant of Ahmad Shah Durrani. The Governor shut himself up in the fort, mounted his guns on the walls and cannonaded the Sikhs from there. The Sikhs did not lose heart and maintained the siege.

The Sikhs having failed to take the fort by direct assault had recourse to a clever stratagem. They suddenly raised the siege and began to retire. The Afghan garrison rushed out of the fort in pursuit of the retreating Sikhs. Charat Singh with his detachment made a detour and succeeded in taking possession of a part of the fort, and assisted by a further reinforcement turned out the rump of the Afghan garrison. Sarfaraz Khan with a handful of followers was allowed to leave the fort unmolested.[3]

Sarbuland Khan is taken captive

The commandant of Rohtas had invited assistance from Nawab Sarbuland Khan, the Governor of Kashmir. Sarbuland Khan arrived in the Panjab on the Indus near Attock after the fall of Rohtas. He was probably detained by the hilly nature of the country. Charat Singh was at this time busy in restoring peace and order in the district of Rohtas. On hearing of the approach of Sarbuland Khan he marched in hot haste to oppose him.

Sarbuland Khan was at the head of a strong force of 12,000 horse and foot; but Charat Singh fearlessly attacked the Afghans, killed many and plundered their baggage. The Afghans fled away

[1]Ali-ud-din, 127a, 160a; Kanhiyalal, 87; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 115; Sarkar, II, 494.

[2]This Governor had previously put to death Chaudhari Rahmat Khan Waraich, an officer of note in Gujrat District along with his Diwan Shivnath, accusing them of having brought the Sikhs there. Ganesh Das, 211.

[3]Sohan Lal, II, 11-2; Ratan Singh, 496-8; *Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 174; Ratan Chand, 38-9.

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panic-stricken and their commander Sarbuland Khan was taken prisoner. He was confined in the Rohtas fort. The Nawab paid a ransom of two lakhs of rupees and thus secured his release.[1]

Charat Singh then subdued the rebellious chiefs and zamindars of the neighbourhood and seized the *parganahs* of Dhanni, Pothohar, Chakwal, Jalalpur and Sayyidpur, after which the whole district made submission to him. He then came to Pind Dadan Khan, the climate of which so pleased him that he wanted to remain there. He therefore entered into a treaty with Sahib Khan Gakhar, the chief of the district, and constructed several forts in which he quartered his troops, giving the command to Budh Singh and Kanwar Singh. No sooner had Charat Singh thus gained a footing in the district than he seized some portions of the Salt Range, and having transferred the selling mart from Miani to Ramnagar, obtained a very considerable revenue. At each place he appointed his own *faujdars* who built forts and strongly garrisoned them. Izzat Singh was given charge of the Dhanni country which he held with much difficulty and by dint of constant fighting. Thus Charat Singh's rule was established over a solid block of territory extending between the Indus and the Jehlam from the foot of the hills to the southern outskirts of the Salt Range.[2]

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The Sikhs ravage the South-Western Panjab, c. April—June, 1764

The other section of the Sikhs under the leadership of Hari Singh Bhangi and Hira Singh Nakai was equally successful in South-Western Panjab. They captured the territories of Lamma and Nakka which were appropriated by the Nakai Misl. Hari Singh then marched upon Multan and captured and plundered it. After this he crossed over the Indus and laid waste the territory of the Derajat. Nur Muhammad says: "They led an expedition against Multan and gave the city over to plunder. The Dogs have brought an immense booty from there. My mind refuses (to describe) what the Dogs did there. O faithful ones! since the days of auspicious-natured Adam none remembers to have heard of such miseries inflicted anywhere except in Multan. But as God willed it each of us also should submit."[3]

[1]Sohan Lal, II, 12; Ganesh Das, 211-3; Bute Shah, 309a.

[2]*Punjab Chiefs*, 92; Ratan Chand, 40-1; Sohan Lal, II, 9-10.

[3]*Jang Namah*, 38; Gian S., 890. No historian of the Panjab has so far admitted the incursion of the Sikhs into Multan as early as 1764, but the *Jang Namah*,

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The Sikhs then marched to subdue the Sials of Jhang territory. These men offered the Sikhs a bold front but were defeated and their territories of Jhang, Khushab and Chiniot were seized by the Bhangis and fell to the share of Jhanda Singh. The administration of this territory was entrusted to Karam Singh Dulu, a Bhangi chief.[1]

Nur Muhammad paid a visit to Chiniot on his way to Lahore only about six months later. He writes, "The city had been ruined by the atrocities of the Sikhs. All the people of the place were in trouble and misery. The whole town from inside and its suburbs lay in ruin. Its buildings had been pulled down and all the mosques were deserted. They were spoiled by the dung and fodder of their horses. The learned people, nobles and the Sayyids of the city led a miserable life. When the Dogs (Sikhs) partitioned this land, the city became the *Jagir* of the accursed Jhanda (Singh Bhangi). They divided the whole country, Sarhind, Lahore, Panjab, Multan, Jhang, Khushab and the Chenab among themselves."[2]

Abdali fails to reach Delhi during his seventh invasion, December, 1764—March, 1765

The intrepid Ahmad Shah Abdali, a man of patience, prudence, perseverance and irresistible resolution, marched once more to invade India at the head of 18,000 Afghans. He arrived at Eminabad in December 1764. There he was joined by Nasir Khan Baluch, Chief of Qalat, with 12,000 strong. He brought in his train Qazi Nur Muhammad to record the doings of his master in India. His position was that of a war correspondent of today. He compiled this account in Persian verse and called it *Jang Namah*. It is a unique manuscript of great value.

The united forces marched from Eminabad to Lahore. The Durrani scouts brought intelligence that the Sikhs had gone towards Lakhi Jungle, 125 kms away. One day the Shah's scouting

a unique and priceless manuscript, giving us full details about the 7th invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani (1765) written by Nur Muhammad, the eye-witness, who followed in Ahmad Shah's train, is quite definite on this point. Vide pp. 38, 41.

[1] *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab*, II, 208.

[2] *Jang Namah*, 72. "Chiniot also suffered much from the Durrani inroads during the last half of the eighteenth century." *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab*, II, 217.

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party was attacked by the Sikhs near Lahore. The news of this sudden fighting by the Sikhs was communicated to the Shah, who at once ordered his troops to march under Nasir Khan to reinforce the scouts. The Afghans attacked the Sikhs vehemently, but the Sikhs also fought with equal intensity. Nasir Khan was opposed by Charat Singh Sukarchakia. In the meantime the Khan's horse was shot dead, which caused some anxiety to his troops. The fight went on till nightfall when both the parties retired for rest. Nur Muhammad who was present in the battle and had a narrow escape from the attack of a Sikh, supplies very minute details of it.[1]

Ahmad Shah destroys Amritsar

Having retired from Lahore the Sikhs made straight for Guruchak (Amritsar). When the Shah learnt about it, he said, "I shall immediately go there and slay the Sikhs. I will level the foundations of the Chak to the ground." Consequently, he prepared to invade the place, which he had already ruined on so many occasions, but which had been rebuilt by the Sikhs. The Shah left all his luggage and camp at Lahore, and with a select body of horse, unencumbered by field equipment, marched for the place and reached there on the fourth night. He was the same Ahmad Shah who in February 1762 had reached Kup from Lahore in 36 hours covering a distance of 225 kms by crossing over two rivers on the way. Now he reached Amritsar 50 kms in four days. This was due to the attacks of the Sikhs.[2] The Sikhs were in the know of his movements, and they had already fled away from Chak Guru. When the Shah reached there he did not find any of the infidels, with the exception of a few men in the fort (Ramgarh) who were seeking death and whose only aim was to lay down their lives for their Guru. When they saw the Shah and his troops they fearlessly came out of the fort to sacrifice their lives in the cause of religion. They were only thirty in number, and quite unmindful of the consequences, did not care at all for death. They grappled with the *ghazis* and were all killed. The Muslims galloped right and left but came across no more Sikhs. The Durrani destroyed their buildings and then returned to Lahore.[3]

[1] *Jang Namah*, 87-103.
[2] The Sikhs were hovering around him at a distance of 10 to 20 kms.
[3] *Jang Namah*, 106-7.

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Ahmad Shah's march to Adinanagar

Ahmad Shah Durrani who felt exasperated at not getting an opportunity to fight with the Sikhs in a pitched battle on account of their flight called a council of war and discussed his future plan of action. Eventually it was decided that they should march towards Sarhind. Ahmad Shah chose to detour through the Upper Bari and Jullundur Doabs, because this part of the country was the home of the Sikhs. Besides destroying the Sikh homes and crops, his troops were looking forward to marching through a rich and fertile tract in order to feed themselves well.

Travelling by easy marches the Abdali advanced towards Jandiala where his helper Guru Aqil Das lived. The Sikhs were hovering in the rear of the Afghan army trying to avoid any pitched action as far as possible, and mainly resorting to guerilla tactics. "When the Afghan troops reached near Jandiala, the Sikhs in a body came to oppose them. A battle was fought here in which the Afghans lost the day, and Rahim Khan Bakhshi was slain."[1]

Ahmad Shah then marched to Batala where he reached in fifteen days since his departure from Lahore. Here another engagement took place with the Sikhs in which Sarbuland Khan was wounded and the Durranis defeated. Batala is 120 kms from Lahore.

The Durrani monarch afterwards proceeded to Adinanagar. The Sikhs constantly kept on harassing his rear. At Adinanagar the Durrani was again attacked by the Sikhs, and it was with some difficulty that he managed to drive them away.[2]

By Ahmad Shah's permission his troops laid waste the whole country and in their ravages made no distinction between the Sikhs and non-Sikhs. This tract called Riyarki abounded in sugar, sugar-cane and dry sesame. These articles together with beef appeared to them as celestial dishes which they enjoyed to their hearts' content.[3]

The battle of the Jullundur Doab

The Afghans then crossed the Beas[4] and entered the Jullundur Doab, where the people had been so much terrified that they ran

[1]*Shamshir Khalsa*, 120; Khushwaqt Rae, 96.

[2]Ahmad Shah, 894; Khuswaqt Rae, 97; Sohan Lal, I, 162-63; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 120.

[3]*Jang Namah*, actual folio 108; but in the MS wrongly indicated as 109. Also 110-11; Ahmad Shah, 493; Ali-ud-din, 18a.

[4]Qazi Nur Muhammad seems so much absorbed in eating beef, sugar and

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either to the hills in the north or to the desert country south of the Satluj. Some of them took shelter in the midst of the thick vegetation along the marshy banks of the rivers or in the caves and dens of Dholbaha. They left their goods and property behind, but saved their women and children from slavery.

One day the Sikhs again appeared before the Afghans. Their heads were full of pride and hearts bent on revenge. No sooner did they come than they checked the progress of the advanced-guard. "Its commander at once reported to the Shah that the hideous-faced, polluted, filthy and hog-natured dogs of ugly disposition had arrived."

On that day Sardar Jahan Khan took the command of the army because he was aware of the Sikhs and their tricks, having fought with them many a time before. He stuck fast to his place and did not move an inch. He was waiting for reinforcements. "The wretched (Sikhs) galloped in the field and created a havoc. They held matchlocks and burning wicks in their hands and shot at our horsemen. (They) ran in the battle-field sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left."[1]

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Nur Muhammad then describes in his characteristic way the hand to hand fight which took place there.

Ahmad Shah advances to Kunjpura via Pinjor

The day's battle being over, the Afghans continued their march and on the third day reached the Satluj, which they crossed probably at Rupar Ghat. When the baggage train was carried across the river they were attacked by the Sikhs; but the Shah's orders were so strict that everybody stood his ground firmly and after a few hours the Sikhs retired disappointed, without being able to seize anything. The Abdali halted on the other bank of the Satluj for the night, and early next morning made straight for Pinjor. At this place he enjoyed tiger hunt in the Morni hills, a famous hunting ground. Leisurely travelling he arrived at Garhi Kotaha and by easy marches reached Kunjpura in two months' time never travelling more than 10 kms a day.[2] It gives us a clear idea that Ahmad

sesame that he forgot even to mention where and how they had crossed the Beas. He describes this battle which took place in the Jullundur Doab because the further description reveals that they reached the Satluj on the third day.

[1]*Jang Namah*, 111-12. [2]ibid, 117-24.

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Shah was not punishing the Sikhs, but he was evidently saving appearances. Whenever the Sikhs appeared to fight him, he never took the offensive but always remained on the defensive. He seemed to have been so much terrified by the Sikhs that he was not passing right across the Sikh territories but was only skirting the foot of the hills.

Plans to crush the Sikhs dropped

Ahmad Shah had arrived at Kunjpura by the end of February. There he halted for some days and discussed plans of the action to be adopted in order to crush the Sikhs. The Durrani officers were afraid of the Indian summer and rains and they showed willingness to go back home suggesting to their master to come to India again in the following winter. Ahmad Shah decided to return.

Alha Singh's submission to the Durrani

From Kunjpura Ahmad Shah Durrani reached Sarhind in four stages. The sight of the city, once flourishing but now in ruins shocked the Afghans greatly. At this place Alha Singh presented himself before the Durrani king with costly gifts.[1]

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Nur Muhammad gives an interesting account of Alha Singh: "In the province of Sarhind there lived a zamindar who was a military commandant. He was the ruler of the place. Though he was a sacred-thread wearer and an idol-worshipper, yet he was very obedient to the king. His name was Alha or Alha Jat. Whether Jat was his title or caste is not known to me. When the king passed through his country, somebody conveyed him the message of the king to present himself at his service immediately and to get his wishes fulfilled, otherwise his whole country would be given over to plunder and rapine. On hearing this Alha Jat saw the king with gifts which were accepted. In the territories of the Panjab, Lahore and Sarhind there is none who has so much influence with the Shah as he. He is more obedient to the king than other Indians. Though he is a Hindu and idol-worshipper yet he is far better than other Hindus. He always fought against the Sikhs, though for the sake of worldly things and not for religion. The Sikhs kept him at an arm's length and fled away in a battle with him. His servants were Muslims and Hindus alike. He serves the king with a will both in his presence as well as in his absence and spares no pains in carrying out his orders."

[1]ibid, 131-3.

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The Shah enquired of him how the city of Sarhind had been ruined. Alha Singh replied: "This country has been laid waste by the Sikhs. I several times fought with them and punished them; but though they have been beaten by me many a time yet they care for nothing. People become Sikhs in large numbers, and wherever a Sikh dies, two come to take his place immediately because this boon was granted to them by their Guru that in the place of one Sikh two would step in. If Your Majesty confers the territory of Sarhind on me, I will soon re-populate it better than ever before, but I should be excused revenues for one year."[1]

Ahmad Shah knew full well that another Governor in Sarhind would ultimately share the fate of Zain Khan. Alha Singh was obedient, brave and wise. He was prepared to pay him the same amount of tribute which he could expect from another Governor of his. It was known to the Durrani that Alha Singh was a Sikh and his appointment to the governorship of Sarhind Province would either induce other Sikh chiefs to accept his overlordship or would cause a rupture between the Majha and Malwa Sikhs and would thus weaken them ultimately. Ahmad Shah, therefore, conferred upon Alha Singh a title, invested him with a *khilat*, kettledrums, and banners, and installed him in the independent chieftainship of Sarhind for an annual subsidy of three and a half lakhs of rupees.[2]

[This diplomatic trick came true. On the retirement of the Abdali the Dal Khalsa under Hari Singh Bhangi attacked Alha Singh for having submitted to Ahmad Shah. The engagement which took place at village Langhhalaele resulted in the death of Hari Singh. Thereupon Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, inclined towards Alha Singh, persuaded the Dal Khalsa to avoid the horrors of a civil war.[3]]

Beginning of the pitched battles of the Sikhs, c. March, 1765

In the previous pages we have seen that the Sikhs in their fights either with the Mughal viceroys of Lahore or with Ahmad Shah Durrani had always resorted to guerilla tactics. They seem hitherto not to have considered themselves equal to their enemies and thus avoided a pitched action. Their constant success during the past two years gave them unbounded enthusiasm, and now they decided

[1]ibid, 139.
[2]Karam Singh, 247.
[3]*Jang Namah*, 140.

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upon fighting pitched battles with their enemies. On the return journey of Ahmad Shah the Budha Dal, having come back from Delhi, had joined the Taruna Dal and thus they had absolutely no fear from Ahmad Shah Abdali in having a pitched action with him. In such engagements they adopted the regular organisation of their troops into centre, right wing and left wing, as is quite clear from Nur Muhammad's account.

First day's battle on the Satluj

Having stayed at Sarhind for a few days, Ahmad Shah marched back homeward and crossed the Satluj, probably at Machhiwara.[1] One morning, when they had hardly gone 3 kms from the other bank of the river, their advance-guard was attacked by the Sikhs. The Afghans immediately got ready to fight. Ahmad Shah was in the centre; Shah Vali Khan, Jahan Khan, Shah Pasand Khan, Anzala Khan and others, with 12,000 troops were on the right; while Nasir Khan, at the head of 12,000 Baluchis was on the left. The Sikhs also organized themselves in a regular battle array. "In the centre was Jassa (Singh) Kalal, who fearlessly stood like a mountain. Close by him was the other Jassa (Singh) Thokah, looking like a lion in stature. Besides, there were many other Sikh chiefs who stood at their proper places in the centre. On the right was Charat Singh, who might be called the dishonoured Chartu. Jhanda (Singh), Lahna (Singh) and Jai Singh were also with him. Hari Singh Bhangi, Ram Das, Gulab (Singh) and Gujar (Singh) were on the left."[2]

Ahmad Shah issued strict injunctions to his chiefs not to advance at all from their places. The battle raged furiously and the Sikhs overpowered the right flank. The Durrani then summoned Nasir Khan and said to him: "The Sikhs have nearly subdued the right wing, because the heroes pursued the Sikhs and went far ahead. This side, therefore, has fallen empty, and the Sikhs have occupied it on having come back. You see that they are growing stronger there. These infidels are showering arrows and bullets like the Tartars. They attack now to the right and then to the left and I am very much struck with their boldness. You go to that side and press them hard. But remember not to advance from your place. The enemy will come to you of their own accord and you must not go to them."

[1]Karam Singh, 242 puts it at Rupar.

[2]*Zafar Namah*, 147.

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Nasir Khan then went to the right wing, but no sooner had he reached there than he was vehemently attacked by Charat Singh.[1] The Baluch chief stuck fast to his ground. The Sikhs having failed in breaking the lines of the Afghans adopted their old stratagem and fled from the field. Nasir Khan was easily taken in and he ran in pursuit of them. The Sikhs, finding the Khan away from the main body, suddenly called a halt, turned back and fell upon him like a bird of prey. The Afghans alighted from their horses, struggled hard for their lives and after hours of stiff resistance, managed to reach their main body.[2] Just at this time they were again attacked by a fresh detachment of the Sikhs. A fierce struggle ensued which went on till late at night, when both the parties retired for rest.

Nur Muhammad's account makes it quite clear that the Bhangi Misl was the most powerful confederacy at this time. Out of 9 leaders mentioned by him, 5 belonged to the Bhangi Misl.

Second day's fight with the Sikhs

Next morning the Afghans marched onward with the sunrise; but they had gone only 5 kms, when the Sikhs came in sight. They attacked the Afghans on three sides—front, right and left.[3] This day they reversed their order, and the right wing became the left and the left wing the right. Their number also was larger than that of the previous day. The Durrani called a halt immediately and organized his troops in the previous day's order. When the Afghans got ready to assault, the Sikhs suddenly fled and disappeared from sight. When the Afghans were ready to march, the Sikhs were seen in their rear. This caused a great annoyance to Ahmad Shah who addressed his troops thus: "Nobody should go ahead and none should move from his place. Wait, the devilish foe will itself come to you. Do not step outside your ranks, but stick to your places like the Caucasus Mountains. When you find that the Dogs have approached you, fall on their heads." The fight then raged for some time and many Sikhs lost their lives.[4]

[1]At this point one leaf from the original MS bearing pages 153-4 is missing and therefore it cannot be said how Charat Singh fought with Nasir Khan.

[2]*Jang Namah*, 148-58.

[3]ibid, 178. Their ignoring the rear indicates that the Sikhs now thought it cowardly to attack from behind.

[4]*Jang Namah*, 178-81.

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Third day's contest near Nurmahal[1]

On the third day with the sunrise all the Afghans got on horseback and marched forward. "We had advanced only 10 kms when the black Dogs appeared before us as they had done the previous day. They fought as they had done yesterday, adopted the same old tricks and disappeared by the same way they had come. They came like a lion and went away like a fox. These wretches came into the field every day as they had done on the first day. These mad infidels did the same and went off; they did not flee but delayed fighting. They felt no disgrace in fleeing, and did not fight in the field. They came and discharged their guns from a distance and then fled away from the fighting ground. They came and immediately withdrew and thus possessed no modesty in their heart and no shame in their eyes. Of course, modesty is due to faith which only a Muslim commands, and these infidel Dogs, the thread-wearers, could not be expected to have any *iman*. In short, these Dogs fought in a similar manner for seven days. Whenever the world-conquering king mounted, these thread-wearing idolators appeared and the damned Dogs constantly followed the troops of the king of the Faith, and when the Faith-protecting king halted these black-faced Dogs fought with him."[2]

Fourth day's skirmish

It took place near Kapurthala in which the Durranis sustained a heavy loss in men and beasts.[3]

Seventh day's battle on the Beas

On the seventh day they started on their onward march at daybreak and soon arrived at the *ghat* of the Beas. The Shah stood on the bank and ordered that all the loaded camels whether laden with gold or with wood, the shopkeepers, craftsmen, merchants, traders, householders, women, children, boys, bullocks and donkeys should be conveyed first across the river. When all had crossed over, the Shah himself came to the edge of the water. Just at this moment he was informed that the wretched Dogs, the brave warriors, fully armed and numbering about 30,000 were waiting on the southern bank of the river for the fight.[4]

[1] *Shamshir Khalsa*, 120. Nurmahal is situated 25 kms south of Jallundur.
[2] *Jang Namah*, 182-83.
[3] Khushwaqt Rae, 96.
[4] *Jang Namah*, 183-4.

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The Shah as usual ordered each captain to take his respective position at the head of his armed retainers. Much time had not passed when the Dogs, according to their old practice, created a tumult on each side and commenced fighting. When the Muslims saw the wretched ones making angry onslaughts into all sides, the Khan, first of all, pushed his horse into the midst of their ranks. The evil-natured Dogs fled before the lions and threw the dust of insult on their heads. The Dogs went on running for 10 kms. In the meantime the *Khans*, Afghans, *amirs* and *wazirs* gave them a hot pursuit and the Dogs ultimately retired from the battle-field. Many of them were slain in the course of their flight. When all the pig-eating, wretched Dogs were lost to view by the faithful ones, they returned from the field and stood on the edge of the flowing water.

The entire camp crossed over the river safely. Then the Shah went to the other side of the water, and last of all, came the Baluchis, group by group. "This was the last battle of the Dogs and this was their last day of fighting. Their cunning and tricks availed them nothing, because they were sad and disappointed. This was the second river of the Doab by which name it is known all the world over. The Faith-protecting king in all his grandeur, glory and victory marched from this place and after some stages arrived on the Ravi, and crossing over it with all the troops and baggage he came to the river Chenab by easy marches."[1]

Ahmad Shah leaves India, c. end of March, 1765

On crossing the Chenab where Ahmad Shah sustained very heavy losses, he encamped on the opposite side and despatched Jahan Khan in advance to arrange for a bridge of boats on the Jehlam. From here the Shah travelled leisurely covering about 10 kms every day and thus allowed the troops to have a good rest. The Jehlam was safely crossed in two days by a bridge of boats and they encamped in the fort of Rohtas. Here the Shah thanked Nasir Khan for his valuable assistance and granted him the territory of Quetta at his request, besides many other favours which the Khan gratefully accepted. Ahmad Shah then generously offered him the adjoining territories of Derahs, Multan and Jhang, the whole country westward of the Chenab, but the Khan in complete agreement

[1] *Jang Namah*, 183-86. It seems probable that the Sikhs left Ahmad Shah in view of the Baisakhi festival which was to take place on April 10, 1765.

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with his counsellors respectfully declined to accept this gift, most probably for fear of the Sikhs.[1]

From here the Durrani went to Kabul *via* Attock and Peshawar, while Nasir khan crossed the Indus by a bridge of boats prepared by Ismail Khan near Dera Ismail Khan and passing through Dera Ghazi Khan reached Qalat.[2]

Possessions of the Sikh chiefs

Besides the details of the campaign, Nur Muhammad gives us an account of the Sikh possessions in the Panjab: "Chiniot is in the *jagir* of Jhanda (Singh). That black-faced Dog is most luminous there. The country of the Chathas and the whole territory of Jhang are under Hari Singh Bhangi. Karam Singh holds Wirpal (Salt Mines according to Ratan Singh, 496), while Parol is commanded by the wretched Jai Singh. Jassa (Singh) Kalal[3] rules over Kalanaur. This malevolent person governs Doab (Jullundur) also. Jullundur is under Jassa (Singh) Carpenter (Kalal). Both of these Jassas work in collaboration with each other and hold the country of Batala in common. Their banners and kettledrums are the same. Gujar Singh and Lahna (Singh) possess Waniki and derive their income from there. Aughar Singh and Sanwal Singh's *jagirs* extend as far as the village of the Sayyids (Pindi Sayyidan). The territory of Chamyari also belongs to them. Both the Dogs have grown rich there. Suba (Sobha) Singh's possessions extend up to the bank of the river. Wasawa (Singh) is his friend and holds Adinanagar, the name of which is so well known. The territory of these Dogs spreads even beyond Eminabad upto the bank of the river (Chenab). Chartu (Charat Singh Sukarchakia) holds Rohtas in his *jagir* and this has grown into a city by his efforts. Natha (Singh) rules over Dipalpur which is situated in the centre of his territory. Jassa (Singh)'s brother and Karam Singh are partners with him. Besides, there are many others of these Dogs who are famous and they hold other territories in their *jagir*. From Sarhind to Lahore,

[1]Very interesting details of the Abdali's crossing the Chenab are given by Nur Muhammad on folios 186-90.

[2]*Jang Namah*, 190-210.

On taking leave of the Khan, Qazi Nur Muhammad, son of Qazi Abdullah alias Kalwar, resident of Ganjaba, compiled the account of the invasion the same year in 1178 AH (1765 AD), and presented it to Nasir Khan. ibid, 219-25.

[3]It was Jassa Singh Ramgarhia.

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Multan[1] and even Derajat, the whole country has been divided by these wretched Dogs among themselves. They enjoy it and fear nobody."[1]

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[1]*Jang Namah*, 176-78. Though the grey-bearded Qazi calls the Sikhs by so many contemptuous epithets, yet he devotes one full chapter of his book to describing their valour and nobility of character. Vide Chapter 16 *infra*.

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CHAPTER 14

Assumption of Sovereignty, April-September, 1765

The Sikhs take Lahore and issue coins, 16th May, 1765

On giving up the pursuit of Ahmad Shah Abdali, at the end of March, the Sikhs retired to Amritsar to celebrate the Baisakhi festival which was to fall on the 10th April. In the recent Durrani campaign the Sikhs had the upper hand uniformly in their battles with the invader, and they were now convinced that either Ahmad Shah would not venture on any other invasion or that he would leave them undisturbed in their possession. In case he waged war with them they were prepared to meet him on more than an equal footing and to assert themselves at any cost. This consciousness of their superiority now made them openly declare their independence and assume the sovereign power. They rebuilt and repaired the tank, the temple and other buildings and spent large sums of money for this purpose. Regular granthis were appointed to read out the Granth daily. "Six of the twelve Misls into which the commonwealth was divided, appointed their representatives in the temple, founded an establishment, and renewed several religious services which have come down to the present time."[1]

The Sikhs spent about a month in festivities and thanksgiving and then resolved to regain possession of their old territories and acquire new ones wherever possible.

On the dispersal of the Sikhs to their respective territories, Lahna Singh and Gujar Singh, both of the Bhangi Misl, came to their head-quarters at Ranghruini near Lahore. To them it was disagreeable to find the capital of the Panjab in the hands of the Governor of Ahmad Shah, and more so because it was in the close neighbourhood of their religious capital, Amritsar. At this time Kabuli Mal

[1]Bute Shah, 15a; *History of Hari Mandar*, 8.

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was away in the train of his master, and his nephew Amir Singh, an inexperienced young man, was officiating for his uncle. Taking advantage of this opportunity they encamped one night at Baghbanpura at the head of 2,000 troops and opened negotiations with the Purabias employed in the fort. These declined to play the part of traitors. After this the Sikh sardars managed to win over Naqra Jat, Mehar Sultan, Ghulam Rasul, Ashraf, Chunnu and Baqar, the Arains of Baghbanpura who worked as gardeners in the fort. They undertook to lead the Sikhs into the fort by breaking in a hole in the wall of the fort at a place where there was not much danger of causing alarm.

Gujar Singh was the first to enter the fort with 50 chosen followers.[1] According to a prearranged signal for summoning Lahna Singh, he set the wooden pavilion of Ahmad Shah on fire. Lahna Singh soon followed Gujar Singh. Amir Singh was taken prisoner[2] and detained in Mozang, and then the fort of Lahore came into the Sikh hands without much resistance. Early next morning Sobha Singh of Niazbeg joined the Bhangi chiefs at the head of 200 soldiers, and put up in the mansion of Meghraj Khatri, nephew of Diwan Lakhpat Rae. The troops of the three chiefs on entering the city began to plunder. The zamindars of the neighbouring villages also began to sack it. Chaudhari Rupa, Lalas Bishan Singh and Maharaj Singh, the grandsons of Diwan Surat Singh, Mir Nathu Shah, Hafiz Qadir Bakhsh and Mian Muhammad Ashiq and other grandees of the city led a deputation into the fort and in the course of an interview with Sardars Gujar Singh and Lahna Singh, said, "This city is called the Guru's cradle.[3] If you look after it, you will also prosper, but if you ruin and destroy it, you too will derive no profit and advantage."

The Sardars accordingly shut all the city gates and issued a proclamation that whosoever would oppress the subjects must be punished. After that both the Sardars rode into the town with sticks in their hands and beat out each plunderer whom they found in any street. Then they offered one-third of the city to Sobha

[1] *Panjab Chiefs*, I, 338 states that Gujar Singh entered the fort through a drain.

[2] Sohan Lal, I, 163 observes that Amir Singh was arrested when he was busy enjoying the performances of his dancing girls.

[3] The fourth Guru Ramdas, the ancestor of all the succeeding Gurus, was born and brought up in Lahore.

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Singh and sought his co-operation in protecting the town. In short, the three chiefs spared no pains in giving peace to the people and busied themselves wholeheartedly in the duties of administration.[1]

The three Sardars then parcelled out the city and its neighbourhood among themselves. The southern part of Lahore as far as Niazbeg, 13 kms from the city on the bank of the Ravi, including Mozang, Kot Abdullah Shah, Ichhra, and Chauburji fell to the share of Sobha Singh who had his stronghold in the garden of Zebinda Begam (Zeb-un-nisa, the accomplished and talented daughter of Aurangzeb) which he turned into a fort known as Nawankot. It was situated between Lahore and Niazbeg on the main road leading to Multan. Gujar Singh was allotted the eastern part of the city from Kabuli Mal's mansion to the Shalimar Garden, in the centre of which he built an unwalled fort which was called Qila Gujar Singh and the site is still known by the same name. Lahna Singh obtained the central part of the city including the fort with the Roshnai, Kashmiri, Khizri and Masti Gates.[2]

No sooner did Charat Singh Sukarchakia hear of the fall of Lahore than he came to the city and demanded a share in the spoil. The three Sardars did not like to make such a powerful chief their enemy, and with a view to outwitting him, very willingly offered him the Zamzama gun which was then lying on the Shahburj in the west of Lahore. They asserted that it was the best part of the spoil, believing that he would be unable to carry it away for lack of bullocks. Charat Singh finding that he could not get anything more, called his troops numbering 2,000 and dragged it first to his camp and then across the Ravi to his fort of Gujranwala[3]. On his return from the Durrani camp Kabuli Mal was waylaid near Lahore and was killed in the action.

As a mark of the assumption of the sovereignty of the province and in memory of Guru Nanak who founded Sikhism and of Guru

[1]Ali-ud-din, 128b-129b; Sohan Lal, I, 163-4.

[2]Sohan Lal, I, 163; Khushwaqt Rae, 129. Before its occupation by Gujar Singh, the site was a rendevouz of thieves. Gujar Singh invited people to reside there. He laid forty wells for the supply of water. He established about a dozen brick kilns, and constructed fifteen shops. The total number of houses built there was 150. There were four grocery shops, 20 houses of flower gatherers, eight of leather dressers, two of Hindu shopkeepers, one each of a blacksmith, a carpenter and a barber, and the rest of peasants. A mosque also existed there. *Tahqiqat-e-Chishti*, 290-91.

[3]Sohan Lal, II, 12; Bute Shah, 309a-b

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Gobind Singh who established the Khalsa brotherhood, they struck in Lahore, Sikh rupees, which came to be called 'Gobind-shahi' not 'Nanakshahi' as Griffin states. The latter term came into use afterwards.

The coins bore the following inscriptions:

OBVERSE

Deg o tegh o fatah o nusrat bedirang
Yāft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh

Kettle (the means of feeding the needy), the sword (the power to protect one's self, the weak and the helpless), victory and prompt assistance (are) obtained from Nanak (and) Guru Gobind Singh.[1]

The meaning of the word '*Deg*' on the Sikh rupees has been generally misrepresented. Browne, *India Tracts*, II, Introduction, VII, gives no special import to '*Deg*,' and leaves it meaningless; while Colonel Sleeman (*Rambles of an Indian Official*, II, 223, f.n.) translates it as 'the pot victory,' which is ridiculous and conveys no sense and no meaning. Cunningham, 104 and Narang, 159 render it into 'grace,' which is inadequate. '*Deg*' literally means a huge cauldron, always used in the Khalsa *Langar* (free kitchen) run by the Sikhs to feed the poor, the needy and the stranger, without any regard to caste, religion or worldly position. It also forms a part of the daily Sikh prayer as they repeat the ideal kept by the Gurus before them consisting of these three words: '*Deg, Tegh, Fatah.*' To use '*Deg*' was to maintain a free kitchen, an injunction laid down by Guru Nanak as a necessary accompaniment of the religious life of every Sikh, evidently with the aim of cultivating virtues of hospitality, charity and service in the mind of his followers.

In those days practically every Sikh chief not only maintained a *langar* (free kitchen) of his own but also considered it a merit to serve with his own hands. The remnants of this institution are still seen at several places, especially attached to the *Gurdwaras*—Sikh shrines. Its general abandonment by individual Sikhs began after the annexation of the Panjab by the British in 1849. But the Sikhs, as a whole, are still noted, all over India, as the most hospitable and serviceable people. This may account for the system.

[1]Ganesh Das, 210.

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The first of this three-fold ideal may be attributed to Guru Nanak, the second to Guru Hargobind and third to Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Nanak had started the langar, the sikh Guru Har Gobind had introduced the sword into Sikhism, and the tenth Guru had granted victory to his Khalsa.

REVERSE

Struck in the Capital of Lahore in 1765 AD

The Sikhs extend their territories, May–September, 1765

On assuming the sovereignty of the country the Sikh sardars spread themselves over the Panjab and occupied it as a permanent inheritance, every leader, according to his strength and capacity, seizing what fell in his way. The chief allowed the members of his band to appropriate as many villages and towns as they could easily manage under their authority, and this work was so hurriedly done that in a short time few parts of the country remained without a Sikh ruler.

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In defiance of the power of the Durrani Emperor, every sardar ruled for himself, acknowledging the superiority of none and submitting to the control of nobody. "God was their helper and only judge, community of faith or object was their moving principle, and warlike array, the devotion to the steel of Gobind, was their material instrument."[1]

We will now look into their further important extensions.

Bari Doab. Four Sikh Misls portioned out the district of Amritsar among themselves. The possessions of the Bhangi Misl lay round Amritsar and south in the Taran Taran *parganah*. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia whose principal possessions were in the Jullundur Doab, held a few towns along the Beas round about Fatahabad and Goindwal. The Kanhiya Misl held the country about Batala and Fatahgarh, and the Ramgarhia Misl about Sri Hargobindpur and Qadian, the tract which is called Riyarki. But all of them had their separate quarters called *Katras* in the town of Amritsar which was regarded as the common city of the whole Sikh people (*Sarbat Khalsa*) and where all used to assemble to celebrate the Sikh festivals.[2]

[1] Ahmad Shah, 898; Cunningham, 104.

[2] *Amritsar Gazetteer*, 10-11.

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The following were the sub-divisions of their possessions:

Jandiala, Batala, Sathiala, Bondala and Mahtabkot comprising the southern half of the Amritsar *parganah* and Jalalabad, Vairowal and Kot Muhammad Khan in Taran Taran *parganah* were acquired and held by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

Mattewal on the Gurdaspur border was held by Jassa Singh Ramgarhia.

Gilwali in Amritsar *parganah*, and Thoba and Panjgharian in Saurian *parganah* formed part of the estate of Jai Singh Kanhiya.

Taran Taran belonged to the Bhangis, Khaparkheri to the Singhpurias, Saurian, Jagdev, Ghonewala and Karial to Jodh Singh, Chhinah to Karam Singh Bhangi and Sainsra to Diwan Singh.[1]

Rechna Doab. Charat Singh Sukarchakia conquered a good portion of this Doab. He placed Wazirabad under the command of Gurbakhsh Singh Waraich, while other parts of the present Hafizabad, Shaikhupura and Naushahra *parganahs* were given over to Sardar Bhag Singh Virk. In the western part of the modern Gujranwala district the Bhattis and Tarar Jats maintained a sturdy independence, while in the *parganah* of Ramnagar, Ghulam Muhammad of the Chatha tribe, a Jat clan, but claiming Rajput origin, raised himself to a position of power. He was involved in frequent wars with Charat Singh Sukarchakia, in which, in spite of the growing power and fame of the latter, he firmly held his own.[2]

Manna Singh, a foilower of Charat Singh, fought along with his master against the Chathas and received a service *jagir* of Rs. 4,000.

Dhanna Singh was an associate of Nodh Singh and after his death served under his son Charat Singh. He died in 1765, leaving two sons, Diwan Singh and Hira Singh, who followed the fortunes of the Sukarchakia chief. When Charat Singh took possession of a great part of Gujranwala district, they came in for a fair share of the spoil, receiving Pahladpur, Kalsian and other villages.

Sahai Singh and Sahib Singh were brothers whose ancestors had been the *chaudharis* of about 30 villages in the modern Shaikhupura district for the past four generations. Both the brothers went to Amritsar, took *pahul* and became Sikhs. Being in possession of some wealth they had no difficulty in collecting a band of followers to ravage the neighbouring country. About this time they led an expedition against Shaikhupura, then possessed by the Labana tribe,

[1] *Amritsar Gazetteer 1892-93*, 21-2.

[2] *Gujranwala Gazetteer*, 15-6.

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which they easily captured and turned into their headquarters. Their rivals the Kharrals allowed them no easy possession of this new acquisition.

Hari Singh Bhangi seized the estates of Kalaswala, Allar, Panwana, Chobara and many others in the Sialkot and Amritsar districts.[1]

Tara Singh, Sahib Singh and Jiwan Singh were the Bhangi chiefs, who on turning out Afghan Governor seized the district of Sialkot and occupied the fort of Sialkot. The whole country yielded revenues worth Rs. 60,000 annually.

Karam Singh Bhangi, a Jat of the Gil tribe of Chhinah village about 8 kms from Raja Sansi in Amritsar district took possession of Firozki, Kaleki, Rurki and Bajra in the Sialkot district besides holding Chhinah and the neighbouring villages.[2]

Chaj Doab, Muqarrab Khan was a Gakhar chief of note who was supreme in the Chaj Doab from 1741 to 1765 and owed allegiance to Ahmad Shah Durrani. Gujar Singh Bhangi advanced from Lahore at the head of a large force to seize the possessions of the Gakhar chief. Charat Singh Sukarchakia joined him. Muqarrab Khan offered a vigorous resistance to the Sikh forces and being defeated[3] in the open he retired to the city of Gujrat, his capital, and shut himself up in the fort. He was immediately besieged and his supplies were absolutely cut off. Muqarrab Khan, did not give himself up to despair and made a desperate sally, cutting his way through the Sikh investing lines. But encumbered with baggage and women he was overtaken shortly afterwards, was surrounded and overpowered. Muqarrab Khan escaped on an elephant and was seen to descend into a deep and wide ravine. The elephant appeared on the farther side but its rider was not on its back. He was never seen again and his fate remains shrouded in mystery.[4] The Sikhs took possession of the city and sacked it thoroughly. They renewed the fortifications, strengthened the walls and Gujar Singh established his capital at this place. The whole district then fell without any further struggle into the hands of the conquerors and it was equally divided between the two Sikh sardars. Gujrat and the Waraich *taluka* fell to the

[1] *Punjab Chiefs*, 98, 151, 368, 441.

[2] Khushwaqt Rae, 133-4; Bute Shah, 220b; Ganesh Das, 207; *Punjab Chiefs*, 373.

[3] Ganesh Das, 208.

[4] Griffin, however, says that Muqarrab Khan had succeeded in retiring across the Jehlam where he was taken prisoner through treachery by a rival chief named Himmat Khan of Domeli who put him to death. *Punjab Chiefs*, 580.

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share of Gujar Singh, while the *parganah* of Kunjah as far as the boundaries of Miani extending to the banks of the river Jehlam was occupied by Charat Singh.[1]

The whole of the Salt Range and its neighbouring territory was occupied by Charat Singh, while the Bhangis took possession of the tract of the country between those hills and the Chenab nearly as far as Sahiwal. The territories of Midh and Musachuha as dependencies of Qadirabad were retained as their own share by Ganda Singh and Jhanda Singh, the leaders of the Bhangi Misl. Miani was assigned to Tara Singh Bhangi and Bhera with Ahmadabad fell to the lot of Man Singh.

The Muslim chieftains of Sahiwal, Mitha Tiwana and Khushab, though very much hard pressed, were able generally to resist the encroachments of their new neighbours, the Sikh sardars. South of the Jehlam the Bhangis had succeeded in wresting from Muhammad Khan of Sahiwal the greater part of his possessions, thus appropriating to themselves the whole Doab east of Shahpur; while to the west of that place as far as Nihang, the country owned the authority of the chief of Sahiwal. In Shahpur itself a colony of Sayyids under Ghulam Shah established a semi-independent authority. This they were allowed to retain unmolested by their stronger Muslim neighbours owing to the reverence in which they were held as the descendants of a renowned saint. The remainder of the Doab, to the junction of the two rivers, was held by the Sial chiefs of Jhang, Izzat Bakhsh Rehan, a powerful zamindar of those parts.[2]

Sind Sagar Doab. The Ghebas had settled in the wild and hilly country lying between the Indus and the Sohan rivers now known as the *parganahs* of Fatahjhang and Pindi Gheb. They had successfully held their own against their powerful neighbours, the Awans, the Gakhars and Jodras till this time. Even the Afghan invaders had not subdued them because they were off the highway in a country difficult of access and Ghebas satisfied them by presenting a small tribute consisting of a horse or a few heads of cattle as the invader passed and thus secured his goodwill. Gujar Singh Bhangi could not make an impression on them to any remarkable degree. Charat Singh Sukarchakia overran the southern part of Rawalpindi and

[1]Ganesh Das, 208-9; Khushwaqt Rae, 130-1; Ratan Chand, 36-8; Elliot's *Gujrat Chronicle*, 19-20; *Gujrat Gazetteer*, 16; *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Punjab, II, 112, 122, 162; *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 320; *Punjab Chiefs*, 580.

[2]*Shahpur Gazetteer*, 17-8.

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laid Rae Jalal under contribution, allowing him one-fourth (*chaharam*) of the revenues in view of his proprietary rights in the land. He could not get much out of the hardy Ghebas and his supremacy over this tract was only nominal. The Sikh chiefs, persisted and succeeded in seizing a good portion of the Doab.[1]

A Marathi letter dated 19-12-1765 stated that the Sikhs were predominant in Lahore and their administration as far as Sarhind was excellent.[2]

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[1] *Punjab Chiefs*, 535-6, *Jehlam Gazetteer*, 45.
[2] *S.P.D.* XXIX, 102.

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CHAPTER 15

Triumphant Emergence of the Sikhs, October, 1765—December, 1768

The Sikhs consolidate and extend their holdings, October, 1765—December, 1766

From October, 1765 to December 1766, the Sikhs remained busy in the Ganga Doab, Delhi, Rewari and Dholpur. On returning to their places after this expedition, the Sikhs enjoyed a short span of respite and spent their time in consolidating their holdings. Two important expeditions are recorded about this time. One was led by Hira Singh Nakai against Pakpatan, and the other by Bhangi sardars against Multan. Hira Singh first secured alliance with the Hans, an important Muslim tribe which was rising to power in the modern Montgomery district under the famous leader Muhmmad Azim. The Chief of Pakpatan was supported by the Wattu tribe. A battle was fought at a place called Bhuman Shah or Kuttewala on the old Sohag. The Sikhs and Hans, who were probably in small numbers were beaten and many of them were drowned in the river. Hira Singh was killed and was succeeded by his son Nahar Singh, who suspended hostilities for the time being. Then the Bhangi Sikhs under their renowned leaders Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh advanced in the same direction. They easily over-powered Muhmmad Azim Hans, seized upon his country and captured Pakpatan. Then they marched upon Multan and after an indecisive conflict, Pakpatan was agreed upon as the boundary line between the Sikh and the Afghan States.[1]

Abdali's eighth invasion, December, 1766

Minute details of this invasion of Ahmad Shah are available in the form of numerous letters and notes written by high officials and messengers who supplied the information of the progress of the

[1] *Montgomery Gazetteer*, 31-2; *Multan Gazetteer*, 27.

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Durrani to the British Government at Calcutta. The *vakil* of Mir Qasim, ex-Nawab of Bihar and Bengal, waited upon the Durrani at Rohtas and probably sought assistance for his master against the English, though Shah Vali Khan, the prime minister of the Abdali, assured Lord Clive in a letter dated the 8th April, 1767 that they had led the expedition "for the extirpation of the ill-fated Sikhs."[1]

The undaunted Ahmad Shah Durrani came to India once more in November, 1766. He crossed the Indus at Attock early in December 1766. At Behgy (Taraki?) about 20 kms from Rohtas on the other bank of the Jehlam, he had a fight with the Sikhs. "Ballam Singh and other sardars who had thrown up several strongholds and stationed strong garrisons in that country, were posted there with 7,000 or 8,000 horse. The Musalman army charged them vigorously and caused a great slaughter, the Sikh chief being slain among the rest. A great number were taken prisoners and several drowned in the river Jhelum."[2]

Ahmad Shah Durrani aimed at reaching Delhi as soon as possible without fighting the Sikhs, and wanted to punish them on his return journey. But unfortunately he was not destined to enjoy the sight of the imperial capital.

In his onward march from Rohtas, the Muslim potentates of the neighbourhood began to join the Afghan invader, and Shah Daulah of Gujrat arrived in his camp in the night of the 14th December.

The advanced party of the Abdali crossed the Jehlam, and the Sikh sardars again collecting the remains of the defeated party on the other side of the Jehlam, made another attempt but with equal ill-success. The Durrani arrived at Sialkot and set out from there on the 10th December. He encamped at Ghuinki (13 kms south-west of Sialkot, on the road to Daska) and halted there for four days, and granted interviews to the *zamindars* of Aurangabad, Pasrur, Gujrat and Sialkot. He levied a contribution of 1½ lakhs from them because several Sikhs had concealed themselves in the neighbouring villages belonging to them.

Sa'adat Yar Khan who had a very intimate knowledge of all the country was employed in all the matters of business about the Shah's person. It was he who suggested to the Shah the levying of a contribution upon the zamindars. The latter were therefore

[1] *C.P.C.*, II, 12A, 16A, 284.
[2] *ibid*, 16A.

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ordered to give *muchalkas* agreeing to apprehend and despoil with every degree of severity all persons carrying the marks of a Sikh. They had accordingly engaged not to give protection to the Sikhs, and should a Sikh fall into their hands, to send him to the Shah to undergo condign punishment.

Ahmad Shah left Ghuinki on the 15th December and stopped at Daska. There Pir Muhammad Nurak's son, waited on the Shah but the other zamindars fled through fear. The Abdali troops pursued and brought them back prisoners. Shah Vali Khan, the wazir, asked them the cause of the flight. They replied that it was not their intention to run away, that the troops under Nasir Khan had marched through their country, that as it was defenceless, they had left it, but that since the arrival of the Shah, their courage was revived. Sa'adat Yar Khan represented to the Shah that if he put any of the zamindars to death, none would at any time afterwards come to him, and that it would be prudent therefore to quiet their apprehensions and dismiss them. In consequence of this advice Pir Muhammad and other zamindars had shown them mercy, and only three lakhs of rupees were charged from them.

The Abdali stayed at Daska for two days and then marched to Eminabad. On the 21st, he continued his march and got as far as Fazilabad, which is about 25 kms from Eminabad and 10 kms on the other side of Lahore. Sobha Singh, Lahna Singh, Gujar Singh, Hira Singh and Ajib Singh, who were in the city of Lahore with a body of 8,000 horse, on the approach of the Shah, abandoned the fort and town with precipitation. Gujar Singh and Lahna Singh retired to Kasur, and Hira Singh, Ajib Singh and Sobha Singh fled over to Baba Farid. Jahan Khan, Barkhurdar Khan Arzbegi and Darwesh Ali Khan Hazarah passing over the river Ravi at Razi Ghat took possession of the city of Lahore.[1]

Ahmad Shah at Lahore

Ahmad Shah reached Lahore on the 22nd December. Here a deputation of the city fathers waited upon him and told him that Lahna Singh was a good and sympathetic ruler. In spite of his power he made no distinction between Hindus and Musalmans. On the festivals of Id-uz-zuha he bestowed turbans on the *qazis*, the *muftis* and the *imams* of mosques, and treated all the citizens with great

[1] *Ali-ud-din*, 130a.

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regard. Ahmad Shah expressed his satisfaction. He clearly realised the fact that the less the Sikhs were thwarted the less troublesome would they be. He addressed Lahna Singh a letter offering him the governorship of Lahore together with a present of the dry fruits of Kabul. The latter sent Rahmatullah Beg of village Modah declining the invitation on the ground that in obeying him he would fall in the eyes of his co-religionists. Lahna Singh returned his fruits also and sent him instead a quantity of an inferior kind of grain, stating that the fruits were the food of kings, while he lived on the grain sent to him as a sample. Ahmad Shah stayed in Lahore for about a week, and having appointed Dadan Khan, brother of Maulvi Abdullah, with Rahmat Khan Rohilla as assistant at the head of 1,500 horse and foot, marched towards Sarhind.[1]

"Jasant (Charat Singh), Jasah Singh the elder (Jassa Singh Kalal) and Hylah (Hira?) Singh, with a body of 20,000 cavalry, were encamped at the village of Kalsiah, about 70 kms from Lahore, and at the same distance from the Beas. Tara Singh and Khushhal Singh with 6,000 horse were stationed at Taragarh, about 8 kms from Nichhla and 30 kms from the Shah's camp. Ahmad Shah gave orders for a body of horse with provisions for eight days to be ready to destroy the Sikhs. Leaving behind such men as were unfit for service, and all his heavy baggage, he advanced with a chosen body of 50,000 horse, the field pieces and 7,000 *jizairs* to [gap, a place], 25 kms on this side of Lahore. On the 27th December at the distance of about 8 kms beyond his camp, he detached Jahan Khan, Faiz Talab Khan, Barkhurdar Khan and Darwesh Ali Khan Hazarah, who took up their quarters at Chak. All the Sikhs who were there retired to a distance of 20 or 25 kms. On the 28th, the Shah fixed his quarters at Fatahabad.[2] He plundered it for about half an hour and killed a few Sikhs who were in the fort. The Sikhs did not attack him, but always kept at a distance of 20 or 30 kms from him.[3]

Charat Singh, Lahna Singh and other Sikhs who were in the neighbourhood of Chak, determined to attack the Shah's baggage which was near Lahore. Accordingly they marched, and falling upon it plundered the merchants, *bankers, etc.* The Shah's brother-in-law with the Shah's family and several officers with about 4,000 horse

[1]Khushwaqt Rae, 129; *Ali-ud-din*, 130a.
[2]Situated 32 kms south-east of Amritsar and 8 kms west of the Beas.
[3]*C.P.C.*, II, 36, 108A.

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was in the city of Lahore. Finding that the Sikhs were very strong, the Shah's brother-in-law did not venture out, but wrote to the Shah saying that the Sikhs had plundered the baggage, they were coming against Lahore, and would besiege him and his family, and requested His Majesty to return to his assistance. As soon as the Shah received this *Arzi*, he marched back and encamped on the 1st January at Mahmud Tooly close to Lahore. Upon this the Sikhs retired about 30 kms. They kept about 30 or 40 kms from him and plundered all the baggage they could lay their hands on. The Sikhs constantly harassed Ahmad Shah and scornfully rejected all proposals of peace.[1]

"The Raja of Chamba sent a *vakil* to the sardars of the Sikhs, and Sa'adat Yar Khan of the family of Adina Beg sent them word that they should make peace with the Shah, since His Majesty had no intention of dispossessing them of their country, but was proceeding to Hindustan; that he would introduce them to His Majesty and settle what country they should cede and what sums they should pay, and that he would put them in possession of Lahore. The Sikhs abused the *vakil* of the Raja of Chamba and drove him out of their army. They also wrote to Sa'adat Yar Khan refusing to make peace with the Shah."[2]

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On the 15th January, Ahmad Shah Durrani was in the neighbourhood of Nur-ud-din Kot and wrote to Khumda (Jhanda) Singh, Jesa (Jassa) Singh Gulal (Kalal) and Khushhal Singh, the chiefs of the Sikhs, to the effect that if they were desirous of entering his service they should come and join him, but if they had any hostile intensions, they should meet him in the field. Charat Singh, Hira Singh and other Sikh chiefs were at Chak with their forces. Two other Sikh chiefs were moving about Lahore, while small bodies of them were hovering all round the Shah's army at the distance of about 20 kms.[3]

Jahan Khan is defeated at Amritsar

On the 17th January, Jahan Khan with a vanguard of about 15,000 horse marched, plundering the country as he went, to the neighbourhood of Chak, where Charat Singh, Hira Singh, Lahna

[1] *C.P.C.*, II, 108A.
[2] ibid.

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Singh and Gujar Singh had assembled. When they heard of his approach, they met him and a warm engagement ensued for about three hours. Five or six thousand Durranis were killed and wounded, and Jahan Khan was at last obliged to retreat. As soon as the Shah heard of this, he himself marched to Jahan Khan's assistance and fell upon the Sikhs who were in the end compelled to flee towards Lahore. Ahmad Shah, leaving his baggage near Jalalabad (on the Beas) pursued them. The Sikhs attacked the baggage; but Nasir Khan Baluch, who had the care of it, routed them and pursued them in their flight towards the jungles. Charat Singh, Gujar Singh, and four or five other sardars were at Chak and in the neighbouring forts with bodies of foot and artillery.[1]

The Durrani in the Jullundur Doab

Ahmad Shah crossed the river Beas the same day (17th January) and on the 18th marched to Shiner Theley (Suhareewal, nearly 35 kms from the Beas?) and encamped there. Rao Megh Raj *vakil* of Najib-ud-daulah, Sujan Rao *vakil* of Mir Qasim, Lahori Mal *vakil* of Jawahir Singh Jat and Bhim Singh *vakil* of Raja Madho Singh came and paid their respects to the Shah. The *vakil* of Amar Singh and Himmat Singh, grandsons of Alha Singh, came and made his obeisance to Ahmad Shah and presented him on behalf of his masters with Rs. 5,000 and 2 horses as a *nazr*. To Shah Vali Khan and Jahan Khan he presented Rs. 2,000 each. The *vakil* of the son of Rae Kalha also came to the Shah. The Shah gave orders to all the *vakils* to write to their respective masters to come into the Presence.

Lord Clive's artful diplomacy

The news of the defeat of Shah's troops by the Sikhs was received delightfully by Lord Clive, the British Governor of Calcutta. A despatch written from Calcutta to the Nawab Wazir of Oudh dated 19th February says: 'Has received his letter to Lord Clive with the papers of news enclosed. Is extremely glad to know that the Shah's progress has been impeded by the Sikhs. If they continue to cut off his supplies and plunder his baggage, he will be ruined without fighting, and then he will either return to his country or meet with shame and disgrace. As long as he does not defeat the Sikhs or come to terms with them, he cannot penetrate into

[1] *C.P.C.*, 65.

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India. And neither of these events seems probable since the Sikhs have adopted such effective tactics, and since they hate the Shah on account of his destruction of Chak."[1]

Lord Clive, in another despatch, writing to Shah Vali Khan in response to his letter, flatters him and the Shah saying, "Praise be to God that through His Majesty's good fortune and the addressee's wise measures the perfidious Sikhs have met with the punishment due to their evil deeds; the fame of His Majesty's greatness has spread to the four corners of the world, and the people of God have been freed from the tyranny of the infidels."[2]

The British Governor again expressed his opinion that if the Sikhs were afforded a little assistance by the Jats and the Rohillas, it was probable that Ahmad Shah would suffer defeat and disgrace.[3]

Ahmad Shah's weak position

Ahmad Shah then encamped at Nurmahal (25 kms south of Jullundur), where he was joined by the zamindar of Patiala (Amar Singh) and other neighbouring zamindars who were coming to him for settling their payments through the mediation of Shah Vali Khan.[4]

About the weak position of Ahmad Shah one despatch says, "The Shah's influence is confined merely to those tracts which are covered by his army. The zamindars appear in general so well affected to the Sikhs that it is usual with the latter to repair by night to the villages, where they find every refreshment. By day they retire from them and again fall to harassing the Shah's troops. If the Shah remains between the two rivers Beas and Sutlej, the Sikhs will continue to remain in the neighbourhood, but if he passes over towards Sarhind, the Sikhs will then become masters of the parts he leaves behind him."[5]

The Abdali crossed the Satluj and halted at Machhiwara, where he was again harassed by the Sikhs.[6]

[1] *C.P.C.*, II, 52.
[2] ibid, 327.
[3] ibid, 145.
[4] ibid, 79, 139.
[5] ibid, 161A.
[6] *S.P.D.*, XXIX, 165, dated 2.2. 1767.

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Ahmad Shah returns homeward disappointed

The Sikhs gave Ahmad Shah no rest. He pursued them in all directions, but to no purpose, as they always avoided an open engagement with him. They inflicted a great defeat upon Nasir Khan Baluch, and the Shah was so much displeased with him that he did not grant him an interview. Ahmad Shah, marching by way of Makri, Giddah, Patiala, and Banur, reached Ismailabad, 32 kms south of Ambala, where he was joined by Najib-ud-daulah on the 9th March.[1]

"It is said that the Shah, on several of the *vakils* representing to him the good consequences of maintaining his situation, flew into a violent rage, declared that he would move forward immediately to Delhi, and expressed the greatest astonishment that not a single zamindar had made offers of a *peshkash* since his first setting foot on this expedition against the Sikhs. Najib-ud-daulah, on hearing this, had a private conference with Yaqub Ali Khan and Rao Meghraj, which lasted six hours. After it was over, he repaired to the presence and said, 'If Your Majesty is resolved to march to Delhi, it is well, but beyond all doubt there will be a general flight of all the inhabitants wherever you pass, and the whole country will become a desert, as already is the case in many parts of it. I have now arrived in Your Majesty's presence and have attained the summit of my wishes, an interview. If Your Majesty actually proceeds (to Delhi), I have one request to make, that you would first sacrifice me and then pursue your intentions."[2]

In view of the opposition of Najib to the Shah's intention of approaching towards Delhi[3] and the Sikh ravages in the rear, Ahmad Shah decided to return and to devote his energies to the punishing of the Sikhs. Consequently he set off backwards on the 17th March from Ismailabad. He encamped at Ambala on the 18th where he called upon Amar Singh to pay 9 lakhs, which sum had become due during his management of the Sarhind country.

Amar Singh received the title of Raja-e-Rajagan

Ahmad Shah then reached Sarhind and showed Najib several favours on the way. Najib-ud-daulah paid two lakhs of rupees on

[1] *C.P.C.*, II, 107C & D, 130A, 213, 214, 234, 254, 266, 415; *Delhi Chronicle*, 211; *Nur-ud-din*, 109b, 110a.

[2] *C.P.C.*, II, 294.

[3] ibid, 310; *Delhi Chronicle*, 211.

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account of the stipulated money. The Shah presented him with a Turkish horse, appointing him at the same time to the supremacy of Hindustan, and Zabitah Khan to be the colleague of the Wazir Shah Vali Khan. Najib, finding the Shah so much inclined towards him, made a proposal to him for the grant of Sarhind territory to his son Zabitah Khan, but received no answer.[1] After some consideration Ahmad Shah agreed to it and Zabitah Khan took possession of the fort of Sarhind. Amar Singh who owned this place was kept under surveillance by Najib-ud-daulah. The Nawab said to Amar Singh one day, "Raja! your Patiala fort is of no consequence. I shall give you my Pathargarh fort of Najibabad which I have made so secure and strong." Amar Singh understood the hint that he would be taken to Najibabad as a prisoner. He lost all heart and despaired of his life. His grandmother Rani Fatto, widow of Alha Singh, a very wise and diplomatic woman, visited Wazir Shah Vali Khan in private, placed her *chadar* (head covering) at his feet and appealed for the release of Amar Singh from Najib.[2] She also offered him a costly *nazr* (gift). The Wazir persuaded the Shah to instal Amar Singh in the *faujdari* of Sarhind pointing out that he alone would be able to keep the Trans-Satluj Sikhs out. Next morning the Shah summoned Amar Singh from the house of Najib-ud-daulah and granted him a robe of honour (*khilat*), standard and kettledrums, the fish emblem and the subahdari of Sarhind accompanied by the superlative title of Raja-e-Rajagan.[3] Amar Singh is credited by Khushwaqt Rae with having secured the release of a number of captives taken by the Afghans from India. Amar Singh became Abdali's most faithful ally in Panjab and called himself Amar Singh Bamizai, like a member of Wazir Shah Vali Khan's family.

The author of *Husain Shahi* says: "Since then to the present day which is 1798 AD, the coin of the Shah is current in the family of Amar Singh at Patiala. Whoever succeeds to the throne issues the same coin in his country and considers himself as a subject of the Durrani Emperor. Amar Singh had engraved 'Amar Singh Bamizai' on his seal because Shah Vali Khan was a

[1] *C.P.C.*, II, 323.
[2] *Husain Shahi*,, 85
[3] ibid, 84-5; Khushwaqt Rae, 168.

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Bamizai Afghan."[1]

The Shah encamps on the Satluj

From Sarhind Ahmad Shah marched to Machhiwara Ghat on the bank of the Satluj, where he organized several expeditions in pursuit of the Sikhs and stayed here for about a month and a half. He despatched his troops to punish the Sikhs who had taken refuge in places difficult of access.[2] Just then he got the news that a large body of them had concealed themselves in the hills of Mani Majra, 64 kms east. The Durrani troops accompanied by Afzal Khan, the brother of Najib, fell on them and brought back many captives, men and women, but their leader was not captured. Much booty as well as captives were sold in the camp cheaply. The Afghans then sacked Kiratpur and Anandpur, the holy places of the Sikhs.

Najib-ud-daulah himself writing to Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor, from the Shah's camp says, "The Shah marched his army to Makhowal, which is the sanctuary and fortress of these infidels; and the chastisement of this unclean tribe was begun and still continues."[3]

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The Sikhs ravage Najib's country

On the 11th May Ahmad Shah gave leave to Najib from the banks of the Satluj in view of the bad state of his health. The Sikhs, a week ago had managed to give the slip to the Durrani troops in passing by their camp and had plundered the Sarhind country. They left their families and effects in the jungle of Rohi, and crossed the Jamuna at Buriya Ghat. They began ravaging Najib's territory, which lay utterly defenceless at that time. They sacked Umbetah and then turned to Nanautah on the 14th May. Subsequently they directed their attention to the Barha Sadat settlements in Muzaffarnagar district. They then stormed Meerut.[4] When this news reached Najib, he at once approached Ahmad Shah and sought his assistance against the Sikhs. The Durrani ordered Jahan Khan to punish them. The Afghan general, taking Zabitah Khan with him,

[1]*Husain Shahi,* 86; also *Tarikh-e-Ahmad,* 17; *Tarikh-e-Sultani,* 146. Cunningham, 113, wrongly states that on this occasion the title of Maharaja was conferred on Amar Singh. Vide Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa,* 388.

[2]*C.P.C.,* II, 323, 345.

[3]Nur-ud-din, 110b; *C.P.C.,* II, 310, 415.

[4]G.R.C., Williams in *Calcutta Review,* January, 1875, p. 27.

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travelled by forced marches and reached Meerut (nearly 300 kms) in three days.

The Sikhs got news of it one hour and a half beforehand, and went away across the Jamuna. Those who remained behind were all killed and much booty was taken. Some Sikhs were overtaken and engaged in a fight between Shamli and Kairanah, two important towns on the western side of Muzaffarnagar district. The leader of the Sikhs was slain, Baghel Singh was wounded and a large number of the Sikhs were killed.[1] G. R. C. Williams quotes from the diary of a contemporary relating to this invasion of the Sikhs: "Indeed this slave of God himself lost some property on the occasion; it was the very month of Shams-ud-din's marriage and Sheikh Allah Yar Khan, son of Muhammad Khan, attained the crown of martyrdom by the hands of the infidels." Miskin, who was present in the campaign, says that 9,000 Sikhs were killed.[2] The rest fled away. Then, in the same manner, the detachment returned to the halting place in the course of seven days.

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Ahmad Shah leaves India and Sikhs re-occupy Lahore

Najib left the Shah on the Satluj. He came to Sarhind district and long stayed at Mustafabad (40 kms east of Ambala), attacked many *parganahs* of the Sikhs, and encamped on the stream of Sarasvati, which is sacred to the Hindus. Najib-ud-daulah arrived at Delhi on the 30th July where he stayed in the mansion of Shuja-ud-daulah.[3] Ahmad Shah, being oppressed by the burning heat of the Panjab plains which was daily growing and the harassing tactics of the Sikhs, and in view of the swelling rivers of the Panjab, speedily left the banks of the Satluj and by fast marches returned to his own country via Lahore,[4] thus leaving the whole country in the hands of the Sikhs.

This was the inglorious end of the last invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali. In spite of his best and constant efforts he ultimately failed in suppressing a militant people who were closely knit together by ties of race and religion, and who possessed invincible courage and irresistible will.

[1] *C.P.C.*, II, 212; *Nur-ud-din*, 111-2.

[2] *Miskin*, 267-68.

[3] *Delhi Chronicle*, 213; *Nur-ud-din*, 112b.

[4] "The Sikhs are so strong in numbers that it is impossible for the Shah to reduce them till after a long time." *C.P.C.*, II, 377, 393, 513, 1365.

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The Abdali's Governor surrenders Lahore to the Sikhs

On retirement of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Sikhs again spread all over the country and resumed charge of their old possessions. Gujar Singh, Lahna Singh and Sobha Singh also came to Lahore and encamped in the Shalimar Garden. They sent a message to Dadan Khan, the Durrani Governor, to vacate Lahore or prepare for fighting. Dadan Khan held a council of his advisers and invited the grandees of the city such as Mian Muhammad Ashiq, Mir Nathu Shah, Hafiz Qadir Bakhsh Tajar, Lala Maharaj Singh grandson of Diwan Surat Singh, etc. All of them unanimously advised him: "The people are very happy and satisfied with the rule of the Sikhs. They might open the city gates in the night or break holes in the city walls and thus admit them into the town. You will in that case fall a victim to their wrath. In our opinion, you should have an interview with them and after having settled something for yourself by way of allowance or *jagir* should entrust the town to them." Dadan Khan agreed and went to the Sikhs, who treated him with great consideration and respect, granted him a daily allowance of Rs. 20 and then occupied the town.[1]

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Sikh extensions of territory in the east, west and middle of Panjab

The Sikhs now began to extend the boundaries of their territories by conquering the parts so far unsubdued. It has already been mentioned that in 1765 Gujar Singh had defeated and killed Muqarrab Khan, the Gakhar chief of Gujrat, and had established his headquarters at this place. In 1767 he started the systematic subjugation of the warlike tribes of the Salt Range and Rawalpindi, and Gakhars, Janjuas and Awans alike gave way before him. He annexed all Gakhar possessions to his own territory and left Milkha[2] Singh Thepuria to govern this part of his territory. Milkha Singh perceived the admirable position of Rawalpindi which was then an insignificant place. He fixed his headquarters there, built new houses and fortified the place in some measure. He then subdued the neighbouring territory which yielded him three lakhs a year. His resolution was so firm and power so great that even the fierce

[1] *Ali-ud-din*, 130b, 144b.

[2] Milkha Singh was a resident of village Kaleki near Kasur. He founded the village Thepur in Lahore District and was called Thepuria. He seized many villages in the Districts of Lahore, Gujranwala and Gujrat. He moved northward and settled at Rawalpindi. *Rawalpindi Gazetteer*, 38-9; *Punjab Chiefs*, 222-23; *JASB*, 40, part 1, 1871, p. 100.

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tribes of a distant place like Hazara had respect for him. Murree hills, however, retained their independence for some time longer. Milkha Singh claimed allegiance from the Gakhar chiefs of the hills and granted them jagirs of 107 hill villages; but the recipients hardly acknowledged that gift, which was more nominal than real.[1]

Then turning to the Jamuna side, we find that Bhai Desu Singh, son of Gurbakhsh Singh, who had inherited a few villages in Kularan, began to extend his territory from this small beginning. At this time Bhikbakhsh and Niamat Khan, the two brothers, were in possession of Kaithal. Bhai Desu Singh advanced from Bhochoki, encamped at Kutana where he collected further forces and munitions of war and then marched against Kaithal, which succumbed after a weak resistance. Bhikbakhsh died in exile, but his brother Niamat Khan fared better because he was liberally treated by the conquerors who granted him several villages in jagir.[2]

About the same time Budh Singh Singhpuria defeated Shaikh Nizam-ud-din of Jullundur and captured parganahs of Jullundur, Bulandgarh, Haibatpur, Patti, Nurpur, and Bahrampur, yielding three lakhs a year.[3]

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The Sikh possessions in 1768

Having overpowered all their enemies, the Sikhs obtained possession of the major portion of the Panjab, extending in the east from the bank of the Jamuna, running from Buriya to Karnal, in the west as far as the Indus from Attock to the vicinity of Bhakkar, and in the south from the neighbourhood of Multan and Sind, to the foot of the Shiwalik hills in the north up to the boundaries of Bhimbar, Jammu and Kangra, interspersed here and there with some petty independent chiefships. Some learned person, out of hatred for the sovereignty of the Sikhs, commemorated the date of this event by the following chronogram which gives the year 1768 AD: "Jahāne Kharāb Shudah"[4] [World has been devastated].

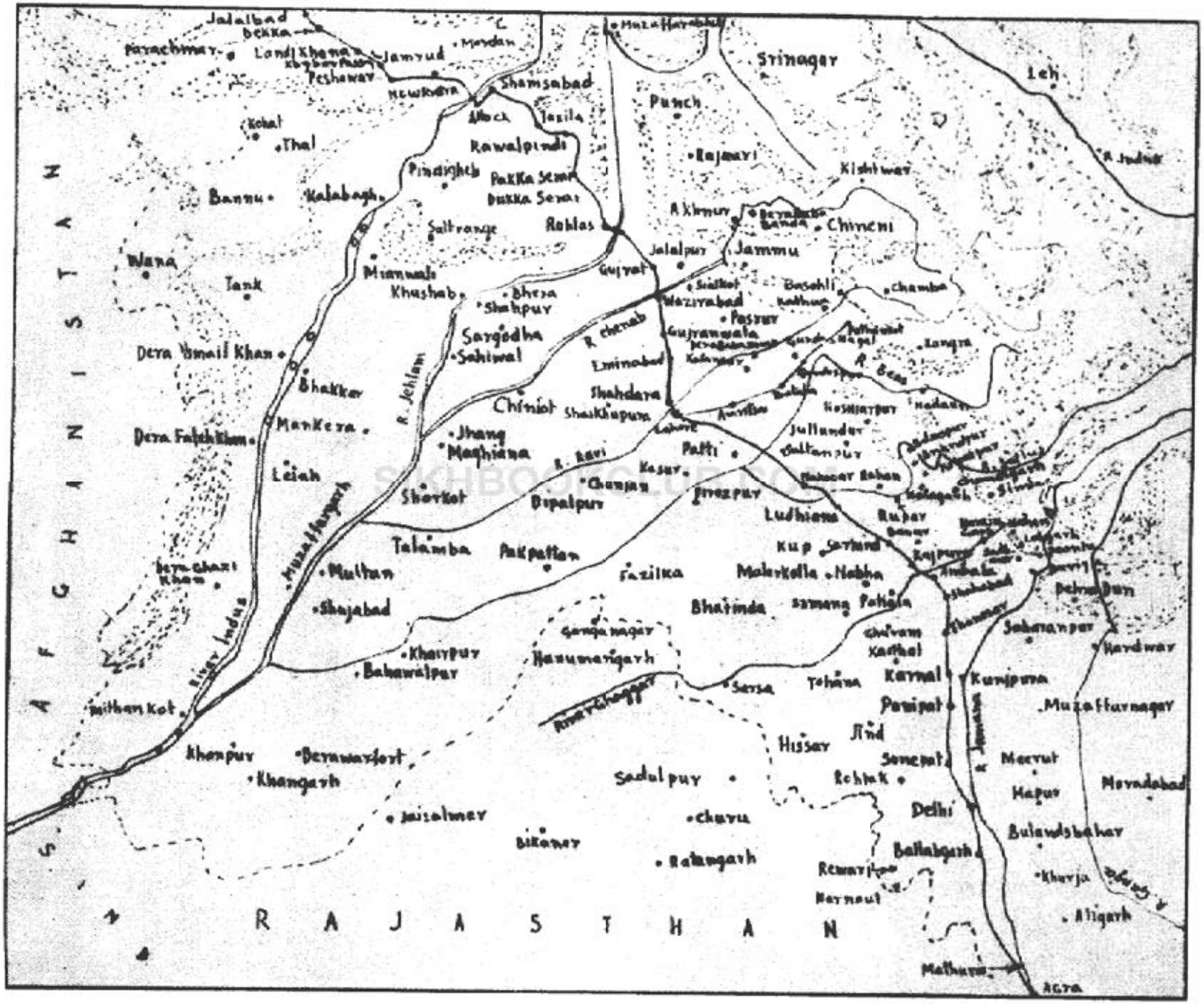
[1]ibid.

[2]*Karnal Gazetteer*, 88.

[3]*Raj Khalsa*, 48.

[4]Forster, I, 324-5; *Chahar Gulzar Shujai*, 501a-b, 545a, 551a, *Maasir-ul-Umara*, II, 516; Shakir, 105; Ahmad Shah, 966-8; Sohan Lal, I, 164, Appendix to I, p. 14; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 43. (Khūshwaqt Rae, 98-9, laments the supremacy of the Sikhs in these words: "The Sikhs secured possession and worsted the Mo-

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Abdali's ninth invasion fails, December, 1768—January, 1769

Ahmad Shah tried to invade India in the cold weather of 1768-1769. He came as far as river Jehlam. The Sikhs fell back not far from him. They attacked him from all sides frequently. Besides, no booty fell into his hands. Great dissensions prevailed among his followers. He was forced to retire. Between Peshawar and Kabul, the tribals attacked him. "His whole camp was plundered, and many of his chiefs and soldiers were either killed or dispersed. The Shah and Shah Vali Khan, his Wazir, in a miserable plight, took the road to Kandahar."[1]

Abdali's tenth invasion, unsuccessful December, 1769-January, 1770

Abdali was starving for money. There was great unrest in his country. To overcome these troubles he again turned his attention towards India. He advanced upto Peshawar. There his courage failed to penetrate among hostile Sikhs. He was filled with dismay, and did not know how to overcome Sikh opposition to reach Delhi in safety. From Peshawar he returned to Kandhar disappointed.[2]

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Abdali advances to Peshawar eleventh time, June, 1770

Ahmad Shah Abdali was so hard pressed for funds that he again planned another invasion of India. Against his previous practice this time he came to Peshawar in burning summer. His commander-in-chief Jahan Khan had died on March 14, 1770. The Abdali looked at India with wistful eyes, and satisfied himself by remem-

country of the Panjab and every one of them seized upon the places which he could. It seemed as if the agents of fate and destiny had distributed the Land of the Five Rivers among them with their own hands. It was effected indeed neither by the generosity of Ahmad Shah, nor by the kindness of Muhammad Shah. Glory be to God, before Whom no bravery, no heroism, no unmanliness and no cowardice count. What valour and prowess is there which was not exhibited by Ahmad Shah and his followers and what timidity is there which the Sikhs did not display? Whenever the Afghan troops under grand generals entered this country, the people of this sect fled to the impenetrable retreats in mountains and forests." He then heaves a deep sigh of grief and says something nasty probably hitting at the humble origin of the Sikhs. Cf. *Chahar Chaman*, 228b-229a).

[1]*C.P.C.*, II, 1499; Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 1769, pp. 134, 195, 203, 238, dated 17 February, 9 March, 19 March, 8 April, 1769, *N.A.I.*, New Delhi.

[2]*N.A.I.*, Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 1770, pp. 52, 57, dated 26 January, 1770.

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bering his past achievements. He had no strength of mind to fight the Sikhs and returned with a heavy heart.[1]

Abdali plans his twelfth invasion, August, 1771, and his death

Having failed to enter India both in winter and summer, the Shah planned a fresh invasion of India in rainy season, as if the Sikhs were afraid of rains and floods. He then postponed it to the autumn. In August 1771, there were strong rumours of Ahmad Shah's fresh attack in the coming winter. General Barker, however, expressed his satisfaction in a letter to Jhanda Singh Bhangi that the Shah would not be able to cross the Indus for fear of the Sikhs.[2]

Ahmad Shah Abdali died on April 14, 1772. On this very day the Sikhs crossed the Indus and plundered Peshawar.[3]

Mughal and Afghan rule eliminated

The Sikhs had only two external enemies--the Mughal Government of Lahore and Delhi and Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Mughal Government came to an end when Ahmad Shah Abdali became master of the Panjab. The Durrani himself left no stone unturned in their suppression, but he had now grown old and his disease of cancer of the nose clung to him so steadfastly that it had become hopelessly incurable. His Indian allies were deserting him one by one, and during his recent expedition none except Najib-ud-daulah had presented himself before him. His Indian revenues were constantly and steadily falling, so much so that the Amir-ul-Umara Najib-ud-daulah himself who controlled the Indian Empire as plenipotentiary of his master, the Durrani Emperor, paid him only two lakhs out of a sum of two crores and eighty lakhs due as tribute for seven years. His soldiers were getting refractory for his failure to pay them and they openly mutinied.

He had realized that among the exploited population of India, a section of society which had succeeded in rising equal to him had become conscious of its strength and was endeavouring to break his power, to cast him down from his privileged position and to occupy it in his stead. Like a true statesman, Abdali had felt his

[1]ibid, 259, dated 19 July, 1770; *Delhi Chronicle*, 225.
[2]*C.P.C.*, III, 868.
[3]*Delhi Chronicle*, 250.

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limitations and tried his best to pacify these people whose attacks he could no longer endure. He confined his ambition to the west of the Indus, abandoning the rest of the Panjab, including the provincial capital, to his formidable adversaries, the Sikhs. Henceforth elhi ceased to be the 'jumping-off ground' of the foreign invaders from the north-west. Now an almost continuous peace with regard to foreign aggression, broken only a few times, up to the end of the century, prevailed in the country.

Abdali's greatest lieutenant Najib-ud-daulah had also openly admitted himself beaten at the hands of an entire nation in arms and in jubilant spirits and nascent energy.

Thus had the Sikhs emerged triumphant from their deadly struggle of the past seventy years, and the long-drawn agony of their subjection came to an end, and the dream of their independence was realized. They had admirably succeeded in holding their own and in steadily pursuing their course, notwithstanding the hosts of terrors and disasters, that gathered themselves together, not only to check their ardour and to intercept their progress, but also to bring them to the verge of annihilation. Surging floods of opposition rose and increased; the impetuous rains of consternation descended and fell; the rending storms of desperation blew and raged; and all these opposing elements struck and beat upon them; but they could not shake the sturdy Sikhs standing on the steel-like rock of faith and freedom. The internal vigour consisting of their dogged faith in themselves and in the prophecy of Guru Gobind Singh that they would one day become a nation, their determined courage and unconquerable spirit of resistance, not only sustained them against the bloody persecution of a great government determined to suppress them, but also raised them up again with greater strength after every attempt to annihilate them.

Causes of Sikh success: Oppression of the Mughal Government

Aurangzeb's misrule was mainly responsible for the revolt of non-Muslims during his own lifetime. Sir Jadunath Sarkar says that "the result of Aurangzeb's long and strenuous reign was utter dissolution and misery."[1] His army numbering 1,70,000 combatants with ten times that number of non-combatants "ate up everything green wherever they moved."[2] "Particularly the Baluchi camel-owners who

[1]Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *A Short History of Aurangzeb*, 1954, p, 419.
[2]ibid, 420.

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hired out their animals to the army, and the unattached Afghans searching for employment, plundered and beat the country people most mercilessly."[1] The soldiers and civilians were in arrears of their salaries by three years,[2] and they fleeced the people. The Mughal jagirdars were plundering their subjects right and left.[3] Nobody's honour and property were safe. "The prime minister's grandson, Mirza Tafakhkhur used to sally forth from his mansion in Delhi with his ruffians, plunder the shops in the bazar, kidnap Hindu women passing through the public streets in litters or going to the river, and dishonour them; and yet there was no judge strong enough to punish him, no police to prevent such crimes. Every time such an occurrence war brought to the Emperor's notice by the news-letters or official reports, he referred it to the prime minister and did nothing more."[4]

"In addition to unbridled sexual licence and secret drinking and gambling, many members of the nobility and the middle class were tainted by pederasty, a vice from which many of the so-called saints were not free."[5] Bribery was rampant in every branch of administration. In the words of Sir Jadunath "in Mughal India man was considered vile;—the mass of the people had no economic liberty, no indefeasible right to justice or personal freedom, when their oppressor was a noble or high official or landowner; political rights were not dreamet of."[6]

Politically a non-Muslim was not "a citizen of the State."[7] His status was "a modified form of slavery."[8] He had to pay a poll-tax for being a non-Muslim. As viceory of Gujarat in 1644 Aurangzeb had demolished many temples in that province.[9] In the biggest temple of Chintaman at Ahmadabad he killed a cow and then converted it into a mosque.[10] In the first year of his reign he forbade construction of new temples. On April 10, 1665, he imposed twice more duty on Hindus than on Muslims for selling

[1]Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *A Short History of Aurangzeb*, 1954, 423.
[2]ibid, 425.
[3]ibid, 427.
[4]ibid, 429-30.
[5]ibid, 431.
[6]ibid, 441.
[7]ibid, 141.
[8]ibid.
[9]ibid, 147.
[10]ibid.

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various commodities.[1] On May 9, 1667 the duty on Muslims was abolished while the Hindus had to pay at the same rate.[2] In 1668 holding of Hindu fairs and festivals was stopped throughout the whole empire.[3] On April 9, 1669, he ordered a general demolition of all the newly constructed temples and Hindu schools.[4] In January 1670 the temples at Mathura were destroyed, and its name was changed to Islamabad.[5]

By an ordinance issued in 1671 all Hindu clerks were dismissed from service.[6] Guru Tegh Bahadur and his companions were killed in November 1675 "on a warrant from the Emperor."[7] Many of their temples were pulled down and converted into mosques. Jaziya was imposed on the whole empire on April 2, 1679.[8]

Aurangzeb killed all Satnamis of Narnaul region to a man, woman or child, numbering about 50,000. The same number if not more of the Jats of Bharatpur-Agra-Delhi area were destroyed. He waged long wars of extirpation against the Rajputs. He fought against the Marathas for twenty-five years of his residence in the Deccan. Several lakhs of Hindus perished in these wars. But to take the most lenient view we may attribute to him the loss of 50,000 men each, total two lakhs.

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Guru Gobind Singh's declaration of war in favour of human rights, 1699

Guru Gobind Singh is one of the greatest saviours of mankind. He was a genius of the rarest type. He saw things hidden to other men. His ideas flashed into the future. Against the political and religious background in the country, on March 30, 1699, at Anandpur at the foot of Shiwalik hills, he made declaration of war in favour of human rights. He anticipated seventy-seven years earlier the ideal of the Declaration of Independence by American colonies against the British Government, issued on July 4, 1776,[9] and

[1]Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *A Short History of Aurangzeb*, 1954, 150.
[2]ibid.
[3]ibid, 151.
[4]ibid.
[5]ibid.
[6]ibid, 150-51.
[7]ibid, 149.
[8]ibid, 157.
[9]"We hold, . . . that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty

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French Revolution by ninety years. It was a declaration of war for civil liberties and political freedom of individuals against government's organised oppression and tyranny.

While creating the Khalsa on that day, the Guru declared that all men were created equal by Akal Purkh (God), that all were brothers, and all were born free. No king, no ruler, no chief had any right to keep people in bondage. The country did not belong to the king. The king belonged to the country and the country belonged to the people. The ruler enjoyed power which was given to him by the people to guide them along the path of virtue and happiness of all. If the king was bad, people must rise in revolt. He asserted that without political liberty, religious, intellectual, social and economic freedom could not be achieved. Political freedom could be won by armies. It was the duty of the people to create armies from among themselves to fight oppression, tyranny and injustice. The Khalsa created by him was to form one of such armies.[1]

Boon granted by Guru Gobind Singh

Guru Gobind Singh's keen desire was:

"Mother dear, I have been considering how I may confer empire on the Khalsa."[2] The Khalsa Dignified men of God[3] or holy and

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and the pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these rights. Governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organising its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness,—when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

[1]vide author's *History of Sikh Gurus*, 174.

[2]Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, V, 109.

[3]The word Khalsa consists of five Persian or Urdu letters:

(i) *Khe*—It stands for *khud* or himself.

(ii) *Alif*—It represents Akal Purkh or God.

(iii) *Larn*—It signifies *Labbaik* meaning: "What do you want with me? Here I am. What would you have?"

(iv) *Swād*.—It alludes to *Sāhib* or Lord or Master.

(v) He—It implies Huma, a legendary bird. Every head it overshades in time wears a crown. Thus the word Khalsa represents God and his men engaged in conversation God asks them what they want, and they requst for grant of sovereignty. Hence Khalsa applies to men of God or holy and righteous men.

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virtuous men created by him.

The Guru further declared:

"Raj Jog tum ko main dinā."[1]

(I have bestowed political power on you).

He emphasized:

Rāj karegā Khālsā

Āqi rahe na koi

(Men of God shall rule,

Bad people shall disappear).

This boon became an integral part of the daily prayer of the Sikhs, called *Aradas*. The Sikhs literally believed in the boons granted by the Guru. They considered them divine words which must come out true. Hence the Khalsa endeavoured to secure a just and upright national government in the country by displaying exemplary character.

Human sacrifice

Just realize the immensity of sacrifice in human blood made by the Sikhs to gain mastery over their own homeland. At the most modest estimate it may be pointed out that Guru Gobind Singh in several battles against him by the Mughals lost about five thousand his newly created Khalsa. Under Banda Bahadur at least twenty-five thousand Sikhs laid down their lives in the national cause. After Banda's execution in June 1716, Abdus Samad Khan, Governor of Panjab, 1713-26, killed not less than twenty thousand Sikhs. His son and successor Zakariya Khan, 1726-45, was responsible for the death of an equal number. His son Yahiya Khan, 1746-47 destroyed about ten thousand Sikhs in one campaign called *Chhota Ghallughara*. His brother Shahnawaz Khan in 1747 assassinated nearly one thousand Sikhs. He was a tyrant. This small number was due to his short tenure of office as well as to the influence of his Chief Minister Kauramal called Mithamal by the Sikhs. Yahiya's brother-in-law Muin-ul-Mulk, 1748-53, slaughtered more than thirty thousand. They were all Turks from Central Asia. Adina Beg Khan, a Panjabi Arain, in 1758 put to death at least five thousand. Ahmad Shah Abdali and his Afghan governors, 1753 to 1767, butchered around sixty thousand. Abdali's deputy Najib-

[1]Koer Singh, *Gur Bilas Padshahi Das*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, p. 148.

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Panjab; those even of domestic and laborious profession, are brave, daring and often cruel. Brahmins are the usual soldiers of the country, many of whom eat flesh meat, and they never leave their home even when not employed in military service, without weapons of offence. The merchants and mechanicks when they go but a few miles abroad, are all strongly armed."

Good government

The Sikh chiefs maintained good government in their territories, which made them popular both with Hindus and Muslims. The Muslims of Lahore told Ahmad Shah Abdali that they were quite happy under Lahna Singh and requested him to confirm him in the governorship of Lahore. The Durrani sent him a letter of authority which was respectfully declined. George Thomas wrote:

"Within his own domains each chief is lord paramount. He exerts an exclusive authority over his vassals, even to the power of life and death, and to increase the population of his districts he proffers a ready and hospitable asylum to fugitives from all parts of India. Hence in Seik territories, tho' the government be arbitrary, there exists much less cause for oppression, than in many of the neighbouring States."[1]

Hugel in his *Travels* observed:

"In truth, there is very little oppression on the part of the governors or thanadars."[2]

James Browne in 1788 stated:

"They collect a very moderate rent, and that mostly in kind, and during any intestine disputes, their soldiery never molest husbandmen."[3]

An eye-witness Muslim poet's testimony

The famous poet Mir who was living in Delhi recorded his own observations of the events which had taken place shortly after the third battle of Panipat in 1761:

"Two days before his departure Ahmad Shah Abdali nominated Prince Jawan Bakht heir-apparent of Shah Alam, entrusted the administration of the city to Najib-ud-daulah, and then marched

[1]William Francklin, *Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas*, Calcutta, 1803, p. 76.

[2]Baron Hugel's *Travels*, 150.

[3]James Browne, *India Tracts*, ix.

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away. On the way Zain Khan Afghan, of his own race and tribe, was appointed Subedar of Sarhind. He advanced towards Lahore. As the arrogance of these people had passed beyond limits, God dishonoured them at the hands of the Sikhs. They formed a body of low-born people, weavers, carders, drapers, brokers, grocers, carpenters, highwaymen, peasants, needy, mean, jungli, disgraceful, base and penniless persons. Nearly 40 to 50 thousand Sikhs opposed his grand army. While fighting they were wounded, but they would never turn their back. Sometimes they would disperse and would capture one or two hundred Abdali soldiers and would put them to sword. They would raise a calamity for them in the morning, and in the evening would fall upon them from all the four sides. They harrassed Abdali's troops so much as they found it difficult to escape. At times they would attack Abdali camps, and at other times they would swoop upon a city and pillage it. With loose beards and hair tied in a knot on the head they would launch an offensive. Hue and cry continued the whole night, and in the day there were frightful screams of lamentation and grumbling. The Sikh infantrymen would strike the Abdali horsemen with a sword. The saddles of their horses were covered with blood. The ordinary Sikh soldiers would drag away Abdali's archers and would inflict upon them all kinds of afflictions. In short these mean people brutalized and disgraced the insincere (Afghans) to such an extent that they lost all prestige in the eyes of chiefs of the neighbourhood. The Durranis could not dare fight them in a pitched battle. To escape with their lives was considered a good fortune. Having entrusted the government to a Hindu they made good their escape. The Sikhs army, looting and plundering, pursued them upto Attock. Having beaten and punished the Abdalis severely they seized this province, worth two crores annually. After a few days the unfortunate Hindu (governor) of Lahore was beheaded, and the Sikhs became absolute rulers. As there was no other claimant, these mean people divided the country among themselves. They began to bestow favours on their subjects. For want of administrative experience they granted remission in revenues to the cultivators without any hesitation and themselves lived upon booty."[1]

[1] *Mir ki Ap Biti* (Urdu), 139-41.

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Conclusion

In conclusion it may be asserted that the story of Sikh deeds opens up the great difference between head and heart, between knowledge and action, between saying and doing, between words and deeds, and between a dead and a living faith.

We now close this narrative of the Sikhs, who placed themselves at the head of the nation; who showed themselves interpreters of the rights of the people; who maintained the struggle between good and evil, between the sovereign will of the people and the divine right of kings, and between liberty and despotism, who avenged the insults, the outrage and slavery of many generations past; who delivered their fatherland from the yoke of foreign oppressor; who displayed all that was grand and noble; who left to the children of this province a heritage unsullied by the presence of any alien soldier; who won for the Panjab the envied title of "the soldiers' land;" who alone can boast of having erected a "bulwark of defence against foreign aggression," the tide of which had run its prosperous course for the preceding eight hundred years, and to whom all other people of Northern India in general and of the Panjab in particular owe a deep debt of gratitude.

Reader! Have we not witnessed a miracle? And yet people say the age of miracles has passed.

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CHAPTER 16

Life and Manners of the Sikhs

The Jats

The military strength of the Sikhs rested mainly on the Jats of the Majha or Central Bari Doab. The Jats may be indentical with Jutes or Getae, but they were neither Scythians nor Huns as alleged by some writers. The name is derived from the Sanskrit word Jesht meaning superior or noble. This word is still applied to the elder brother of the husband, showing his position of superiority and honour. In every respect, they are intensely Aryan, in their features, in their figures, in their language, and particularly in their institutions. They belonged to the Vaishya class of the Aryans and were the producers of wealth. The senior class of Vaishyas produced money by trade and through the learned professions. The Jats created money out of soil. They formed the principal agricultural class.

Physique

Accustomed from infancy to the most laborious outdoor life and hardest fare, they grew tall, muscular and healthy. They possessed a light frame which was very often exceedingly wiry and capable of great endurance that really appeared astonishing. The genuine Khalsa knew no occupation but war and agriculture, and hence hardened by bold exploits and inured to climate they acquired a physique far superior to that of the general run of Indians. Their thorough-bred looks, martial bearing and dignified appearance could elicit praise even from their bitterest foes. A Muslim historian, though passing the foulest remarks about the Sikhs, which we refrain from reproducing here says, "It may not be unknown that after the Durranis no other troops can be compared to the Sikhs. This sect abounds in giant-sized and lion-limbed youths whose stroke of the leg would certainly cause instantaneous

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death to a *Vilayti Qipchaq* horse. Their matchlock strikes a man at a distance of nine hundred paces and each of them covers six hundred kms on horseback. Clearly enough, had it not been so how would they have succeeded in opposing the *Vilayti* troops? After all, the Durrani army also admitted the sharpness of the sword of the Sikhs."[1] George Thomas, another contemporary testified to this fact in the following words: "When mounted on horseback, their black flowing locks, and half-naked bodies, which are formed in the stoutest and most athletic mould, the glittering of their arms, and the size and the speed of their horses, render their appearance imposing and formidable, and superior to meet most of the cavalry in Hindostan."[2]

So far as their personal appearance is concerned we can imagine their calm, courteous and striking faces and piercing and animated eyes hidden between the mass of moustache and head. Their faces had regular, strongly-marked and handsome features, full of energy in the expression. Their skin was light brown and very often smooth, and fresh-looking. They had, as a rule, beautiful teeth, white, strong and regular, which they cleaned with the usual tooth-stick. The hair, of course, was black and the beards and moustaches were greatly cared for. Their average weight as supposed by an intelligent man of their class, was a little less than a quintal, and height from 180 to cms 200.[3]

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Disposition

The Sikhs, though not an intellectual race, possessed considerable shrewdness united with unusual independence of character. They were sober and well-disposed with a high spirit and frank, simple and unsophisticated manners. They were well-behaved, brave, self-respecting and honourable. In their dealings with one another they were good-humoured, cheerful and open, perhaps too confiding. They betrayed no signs of timidity or cringing in their manners. They seemed a jovial, light-hearted people, fond of sport, sociable and upright in their domestic life. They were, by no means, devoid of humour. They indulged in a good deal of somewhat coarse raillery. A Sikh loved a joke when the point was broad enough for him to see and he enjoyed very much an appositely quoted

[1] *Imad-e-Sa'adat*, 71.
[2] *Memoirs*, 73. Cf. Francklin's *Shah Aulum*, 77.
[3] Colonel Polier's *Memoir* in Forster, I, 334; Malcolm, 104.

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proverb. No inferiority or superiority complex existed among them[1].

Character

There was no quality possessed by the Sikhs more remarkable than the elasticity of character, the power to adapt themselves to all circumstances, an expansive and contractive principle susceptible of being adjusted to the requirements of the moment. They possessed great vigour of body and mind to withstand the changes of climate. The burning sun, heavy rains, freezing winter and rough weather exercised no deterring influence on them. The utmost persecution by the enemies of their faith, the demolition of their homesteads and sacred buildings and the enslaving of their women and children did not damp their spirits. As a consolation to them amidst their never ceasing anxiety, restless movement, everchanging scene and unconsciousness as to what the next day might bring forth, they had in them all a sufficient antidote against the fancies which were bound to arise in solitude and in separation from their dear ones. Thus it was due to these faculties that the Sikhs under the pressure of the severest type of calamities displayed a courage and manifested a perseverance of the most obstinate kind.

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The other conspicuous trait of their character was the true blood of loyalty and devotion to their *Panth* surging in their veins. They never allowed their private feelings, desires, loves, sorrows, likes and dislikes to come between them and the good of the *Panth*. A true Sikh let his body be cut to pieces when fighting for his faith; nay, he considered dying in battle a means of salvation. Some may say that a soldier sells his head for the petty dole he receives every month; but a Sikh did not do so. He was a different man from a conscripted soldier. He served his country of his own free-will. He was, therefore, full of enthusiasm; proud of his wounds, and glorious in his death. He was comforted even in the most cruel sufferings by his exaltation, the love of his country and religion, in the vows he made, and in prayers which he addressed to *Wah Guru* for the triumph of his cause. He devoted his head, heart, body and everything dear to him to preserving the influence of his *Panth*. Death, in all its forms, steadily looked him in the face more often than we can imagine, but a Sikh maintained a calm, cheerful and dignified demeanour, muttering slowly, "*Nanak! Das sada qurbani.*"

[1]Browne, Introduction, X; Malcolm, 130; Khushwaqt Rae, 102; *Ali-ud-din*, 192b.

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(Thy servant, O Nanak! stands ready for sacrifice). This was the noble expression of his spirit.

On the other hand, their success did not make them lose their head. They remained humble, simple and quiet as they were before and proved themselves true and faithful followers of the Guru in magnanimously playing the part of a hero [Sardar] in times of misfortune and warfare and that of a good fellow [Bhāi] in *halcyon days* of peace and prosperity. They seldom resorted to cold-blooded murder even of their enemies and respected the chastity of women as their faith and honour. Thus we can safely say that prosperity did not spoil them and adversity could not crush them.

As for the bravery and warlike spirit of the Sikhs, they were full of daring, impetuous valour, unflinching courage, patient endurance of fatigue, high aspirations and manliness of sentiment. No superiority of his enemies in number, no stroke, no shot, no shell could make his heart quail since his *Amrit*, taken at the time of baptism, bound him to fight single-handed against millions. They could ply their swords, pliant as a cane and sharp as a razor, with the perfect ease and dexterity, while in the discharge of matchlocks they were invariably dead shots. In a contest with their enemies, they would rush at them like tigers, moving their swords like forked lightning and even the dreaded Durranis found their match in them.

As a testimony to what we have said above, we hand over the pen to Qazi Nur Muhammad, the bigoted author of the *Jang Namah*, who came in the train of Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1764 to fight against the Sikhs. This Qazi, though he uses most offensive expressions for the Sikhs, their religion and their Gurus, as we have had occasion to quote above, feels rather compelled to present a faithful picture of his formidable enemies. He says:, "Do not call the Sikhs 'dogs,' because they are lions and are brave like lions in a battle-field. How can a hero of the battle who fights like a lion be a dog? If you cherish a desire of learning the art of war, come before them in the field. They will show you such (wonderful) feats of war. O, swordsman! If you want to learn the modes of fighting, learn from them how to face the foe like a hero and how to come out unscathed from the battle. You may know that their title is Singh (lion) and it is injustice to call them dogs. O youth! If you are ignorant of the Hindi language (I can tell you that), the meaning of Singh is lion. In fact they are lions at the time of battle and when in festivities they surpass Hatim (in generosity). When

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they take hold of the Indian sword in hand they gallop from Hind (Ganga Doab, invaded in February, 1764) upto the country of Sind. Nobody, however strong and wealthy, dared to oppose them. When they fight with a spear, they bring defeat to the army of the enemy. When they hold the spear-head upward they break to pieces even the Caucasus Mountain. When they bend a bow they set in it the foe-killing arrow. When they pull it up to the ear, the body of the enemy trembles like a cane. If their hatchet strikes a coat of mail, then this coat of mail itself on the body of the enemy becomes a shroud. The body of each of them looks like a hillock and in grandeur it excels fifty men. Bahram Gor (an Iranian hero) killed wild asses and could frighten tigers. If Bahram Gor comes before them, he also would admit their superiority.

"In addition to these arms when they take up a musket in hand at the time of battle, they come to the field fiercely springing and roaring like lions and (immediately) split many a breast and make the blood of many others roll in dust. You may say that this musket was invented in ancient times by these dogs and not by Luqman Hakim (Aesop). Though guns are possessed in large numbers by others, yet nobody knows them better. These bad-tempered (people) discharge hundreds of bullets on the enemy on the right and left and in front and on the back. If you disbelieve in what I say, enquire from the brave warriors who will tell you more than what I have said and would have nothing but praise for their (art of) war. The witnesses of my statement are those thirty thousand heroes who fought with them.

"O hero! if their troops take to flight, do not consider it a defeat. It is a trick of their mode of war. May God forbid the repetition of such a fraud! They resort to this deception in order to make the angry enemy grow bold and run in their pursuit. When they find them separated from their main body and away from help and reinforcement, they at once turn back and give them the hardest possible time. Did you not see that in the battle they took to flight by way of cunning from before the Khan, then turned back from a distance and surrounded the Khan in a circle? The world-famous wrestler (the Khan) alighted from his horse, fought against them valiantly and in the end the hero escaped from their midst.

"O valiant fighter! do justice to their (art of) war. One of their armies invaded Multan and gave the city over to plunder. The

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'dogs' carried off a lot of booty, and my heart does not permit me (to narrate) what the 'dogs' did there. Nobody remembers (such a catastrophe) from the times of the good-natured Adam. None else had ever subjected Multan to such a plunder and pillage. But as God had ordained such a revolution, each of us submitted to His will.

"Besides their fighting, listen to one thing more in which they excel all other warriors. They never kill a coward and do not obstruct one who flees from the field. They do not rob a woman of her gold and ornaments, may she be a queen or a slave-girl. Adultery also does not exist among the 'dogs.' 'None of them is a thief.' A woman whether young or old is called by them a '*Burhiya*'—one who has retired from the world. The meaning of 'burhiya' in Hindi language is an aged woman. The 'dogs' never resort to stealing and no thief exists among them and they do not keep company with the adulterer and the thief."[1]

If we have to point out any defect in the character of the Sikh of this period, we might blame him for his raids and plundering expeditions. This can be done on strictly moral grounds. But in coming to this conclusion we lose sight of two important factors. Firstly, we make the mistake of judging him by the present day standard or according to an ideal code of ethics. During the period under review even Government officials attached no importance to property rights. Najabat Khan of Kunjpura, Isa Khan Munj and many others openly resorted to plundering and waylaying travellers. The ministers of the Delhi Empire took no notice of their misdeeds because they also received a share in the booty. Secondly, we forget that the Sikhs were a persecuted people to whom all means of livelihood were denied. Thus they were compelled to such a course by bare necessity.

Moreover organised brigandage was only a transitional stage to national heroism. It was as a freebooter that Nadir Shah became the greatest national hero of Iran and secured her liberation from the Afghan yoke. Ahmad Shah Abdali followed in his footsteps and made Afghanistan, his homeland, free and independent. The Sikh, though a plunderer and freebooter in the ordinary sense of the word, was impelled by a higher moral force which brought out all his virtues.

[1]Cf. Forster, I, 333; *Ali-ud-din*, 128a.

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Recruitment to the Sikh army

Generally Sikhs were recruited as soldiers in the Sikh army and no consideration was paid to their original caste or creed. Enlistment was voluntary. The fresh recruits could join the contingent of any chief and had perfect liberty to transfer their services to a more popular leader. Hence it was always incumbent upon the chief to maintain his popularity and to keep his followers in good humour. No records of the soldiers' names, service, payment, etc., were kept. This fact accounts for our failure to have an exact number of the strength of the Sikh army. Regarding this matter we are left entirely to guess work and the rough estimate of the contemporary writers.[1]

Drill and discipline

The Sikh soldiers were given no training in drill, marching, manner of attack or the ways of defence, etc. either individually or in groups. As a matter of fact the Sikhs of those days never dreamed of such things. In spite of this drawback, the Sikhs never proved themselves bad soldiers or wanting in war tactics. This deficiency of the military science was made up by their religious zeal, single-minded devotion to the *Panth*, strong passion of revenge and intense feeling of self-respect. There was no organisation of the Sikh soldiers into regular regiments of uniform size. The contingents of individual chiefs, who were numerous, and whether their number was big or small, formed the units of the Dal Khalsa. When the expedition was organized on a large scale, the whole Dal Khalsa united under the command of one supreme chief, usually Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, and all the heads of the various contingents obeyed him though much was left to their discretion. In cases of disobedience of orders a council of war consisting of five prominent leaders punished them, and these punishments were borne without any grumbling because it was considered that they were decreed by the Guru through his chosen five. The Sikhs, therefore, humorously gave such punishment the name of receiving one's salary. It may be noted that the cases of disobedience were very rare.[2]

Modes of payment

The modes of payment to the Sikh soldiers were various. They

[1]Cf. Forster, I, 331.

[2]'Though orders are issued in a Sicque army,' says Forster on p. 329 of his *Journey*, I, 'and a species of obedience observed, punishments are rarely inflicted.'

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were paid no monthly salary or weekly wages. They were permitted to retain a portion of the booty acquired in a raid. To some money was also paid in small sums while others were allotted lands; but the most common method, then in vogue, was to pay them in kind at the time of each harvest. A fixed quantity of grain, cotton, sugar and fodder, and other things, the produce of the country. was allowed to each individual.[1]

Equipment

The accoutrements of a Sikh soldier while on a march consisted of offensive and defensive weapons, priming horns, ammunition pouches, two blankets, a grain bag and heel ropes, while their cooking utensils were carried on ponies. Swords, spears, scimitar, sabre, two-edged daggers, lances, muskets, guns, cutlasses, pikes, bows and arrows were generally employed. In the handling of these arms, especially the matchlock and the sabre, they were uncommonly expert. Shield of hide and sometimes a coat of arms were the main weapons of defence. The chiefs were only distinguishable from their followers by finer horses and arms. In their excursions or in the camps they carried no tents. The chiefs were sheltered by only a small square canopy of coarse cotton cloth, supported on four lances, planted in the ground, while the soldiers rested on the bare ground under a blanket spread over two lances in case of rain and sun and placing beneath this rude shelter a saddle and a blanket to serve the office of a mattress and pillow; otherwise they wrapped themselves in cotton sheets in summer and in blankets in winter. On a march they put the blankets beneath the saddle, so that with this scanty accoutrements they could encamp or decamp in a few minutes at their will.[2]

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Method of warfare

The method of warfare of the Sikhs was rather crude. They generally adopted guerilla tactics of warfare, though about 1765 they seem to have taken to settled fighting in ranks. Their method of attack, as is described by contemporary writers, was this. A party of Sikh horsemen numbering from forty upward would advance towards the ranks of the enemy galloping at a quick pace and

[1]*Memoirs of George Thomas*, 75-6.

[2]Forster, I, 332-4; Browne, Introduction, IX, X; *Memoirs of George Thomas*, 71-3; Francklin's *Shah Aulum*, 76; Malcolm, 141; *Ali-ud-din*, 193a.

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would suddenly draw up their horses who were so expertly trained to this sort of performance that on receiving a stroke of the hand they would stop from a full gallop. Then they simultaneously discharged their loaded guns from a distance with such marksmanship that not a single shot would fail in its aim. After that they suddenly retired to about a hundred paces, re-loaded their pieces and repeated the old process. All this was done with an alacrity and activity unparalleled by other people of India. This caused a great annoyance to the enemy and made them helpless against it. The Sikhs, on their part, were no more troubled about bullets, shells and balls than, if they had been mosquitoes, flies or bees.[1]

Another method was engaging the enemy at close quarters in a continued skirmish, advancing and retreating so rapidly and with such vigour that the enemy soon got puzzled. This process was continued until the man and the animal became equally exhausted. The front ranks then would retire to the rear and fresh troops would come forward to replace them in turn. The fatigued horses were let loose to graze for a while and the soldiers themselves would wash down their throat a little parched gram, and thus refreshed would renew their attacks.[2]

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An old tactic, so frequently resorted to by the Sikhs, was to discharge a sudden volley of bullets and arrows upon the enemy, engage them in fight for an hour or so, and then suddenly retire from the field. This gave the enemy an idea that the Sikhs had taken to flight. A detachment of the enemy pursued them When the Sikhs found their pursuers away from the immediate succour of their main body, they would, all of a sudden, come to a halt, return and attack them vehemently. Each Sikh fought hand to hand with his opponent, grappled his body to his, gripped and wrestled with him and threatened him with frowning looks, dreadful gestures, horrible distortions and hideous cries. They then throttled, tore and slaughtered him thus cutting the whole batch to pieces.

Sometimes combats between individuals were held. This was the most attractive form of fighting, because it allowed personal valour to come out glaringly. The Sikhs were light horsemen, each man carrying his food, forage, bedding, head and heel ropes for their animals, marching from 80 to 150 kms after a defeat, and then

[1]Forster, I, 332-3; Francklin's *Shah Aulum*, 76.
[2]*Memoirs of George Thomas*, 71-3.

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halting in complete readiness to fight on the following day.

At the time of Ahmad Shah's seventh invasion we come across two or three cases when the Sikhs preferred to have a pitched battle. We find them organised in a regular battle array to which we have already referred in these pages.

Raids

It was in their raids that the Sikhs were at their best. In the beginning of the period treated of in the previous pages we started with them as raiders and left them at the end as rulers, but still retaining an essential part of their old character. Their perfect self-confidence, the lightning-like rapidity of their movements and the manner in which they could extort money from the people made them a great terror, to which large tracts full of teeming population yielded so submissively that one or two Sikhs could easily over-awe a big village. This will be clear from an entry recorded by Forster when on his travels, dated the 28th February, 1783 at Kheynaspoor near Dehra Dun. It runs,—'I saw two Sicque horsemen, who had been sent from their country to receiv· the Siringaghur tribute, which is collected from the revenues of certain custom-houses. From the manner in which these men were treated, or rather treated themselves, I frequently wished for the power of migrating into the body of a Sicque for a few weeks—so well did these cavaliers fare. No sooner had they alighted, than beds were prepared for their repose, and their horses were supplied with green barley pulled out of the field. The *Kafilah* travellers were contented to lodge on the ground, and expressed their thanks for permission to purchase what they required; such is the difference between those who were in, and those who were out of power."[1]

Marching from 100 to 200 kms daily and continuing the exertion for many successive days, which might appear incredible to us, their incursions became formidable.[2] As most of the Sikh soldiers had two or three horses each, they could quickly gather large booty. Franckline in his *Shah Aulum* (pp. 76-7) gives the following interesting details about the manner in which they conducted their predatory excursions. He writes, 'Inured from their infancy to the hardships of a military life the Seiks are addicted to predatory warfare in a manner peculiar to themselves alone. When determined to

[1] *Journey*, I, 229, 333.

[2] Browne, Introduction. IX; Forster, I, 333.

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invade a neighbouring province, they assemble at first in small numbers on the frontier, when having first demanded the *rakhi* or tribute, if it be complied with, they retire peaceably, but when this is denied, hostilities commence, and the Seiks in their progress, are accustomed to lay waste the country on all sides, carrying along with them as many of the inhabitants as they can take prisoners and all the cattle. The prisoners are detained as slaves, unless redeemed by a pecuniary compensation. Griffin writes: "One thing, in their favour must be said, which raises them far above the Pindaris of Central India of the Dacoits of Bengal: they fought and plundered like men, and not like demons. There are few stories in Sikh History of outrage to women and torture to men such as stain the pages of South Indian History with cruelty and blood."[1]

Horses

The Sikhs had achieved success rather to a wonderful degree in horsemanship. Without property, without home and without family, the Sikhs, in their days of persecution, had for all their worldly goods, their horses and their weapons, which were to them their dearest possessions, with whom they would most reluctantly part. Their horses were so expertly trained that they responded to their voice, touch of the hand and stroke of the heel. The men had acquired such practice in handling even a swimming horse that they could swim across a swollen and swift river with perfect easiness of mind. The love of a Sikh soldier for his horse was proverbial. They never hesitated in spending any amount of money in decorating and furnishing their horses, and, as a matter of fact, the quality of a horse and its equipment displayed the social and financial position of its owner. Its utility to them in the life of those days they clearly understood. "Though they make merry on the demise of any of their brethren," says Forster on p. 334 of Vol. I of his *Journey*, "they mourn for the death of a horse thus shewing their love of an animal so necessary to them in their professional capacity." Their horses were of the middle size, strong, active, patient, mild-tempered and noted for incredible endurance. The Sikh horses were of the best breed in India 'owi ıg to the use formerly made there of Arabian and Persian stallions, and something in the temperature of the air and water of the country."[2]

[1] *Rajas of the Punjab*, 17.
[2] Browne, Introduction, IX.

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There were several good breeding grounds of horses. The horses of the sub-divisions of Fatahjhang, Pindi Gheb and Rawalpindi were much sought after; those of the Jehlam district, especially of the Dhan, were held in good estimation. The greater part of the Sikh cavalry was horsed from the Dhanni plains, north of the Salt Range. Some of them were fast, but nearly all were graceful, remarkably enduring and able to go over the stoniest ground without shoes. The horses of Jhang and Multan bore a high reputation and the mares were esteemed to be among the best in the Panjab. The horses bred along the Lahore border, in the Nakka country, were held in good repute. These were country-bred, large, strong and long-winded and were much fancied by the Sikhs. These were uncommonly fine mares or stallions.[1] The Lakhi Jungle was also famous for a breed of excellent horses called the *Jungle Sazi*.

Horses were generally fed on gram, barley and a kind of grass called '*doob*' which is very nutritive, but *moth*, *bajra* and *tara-mira* were also in use. In the spring they were stuffed with green wheat and *gur*. The usual feed for a brood mare was 4 kg of grain a day besides grass. Colts were allowed to run loose in the young wheat, and were also given *jowar* and *moth*. Breaking in commenced when they were two years old. They were, at first, ridden bare back. An amble was the favourite pace, but an accomplished mare was taught to go through many exercises.

The prices of the horses ranged between two hundred and one thousand rupees George Thomas remarks that the breeders were averse to dispose of their brood mares, and if they were prevailed upon to do so, they would exact double the price, though in general with regard to the foreigners, they could not be persuaded to part with a brood mare for any price.[2]

Their food

The food of the Sikhs was of the simplest and coarsest kind, of little variety and such as is used by the poorest people in India from necessity. Two or three meals a day were eaten, according to the

[1]Abul Fazl in the *Ain-e-Akbari* remarks that 'these horses resemble Iraqis and are very fine.' *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 41-42; *Khulasat*, 66, 75.

[2]Cf. Forster, I, 332, 334; Browne, Introduction, IX; *Memoirs of George Thomas*, 73-4, 133-4; Francklin's *Shah Aulum*, 76; Malcolm, 140; Alexander Burnes' *Travels*, I, 11; *Ali-ud-din*, 27b-28a; *Jhelum Gazetteer*, 113-4; *Jhang Gazetteer*.123; *Montgomery Gazetteer*, 127.

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season of the year and the amount of work to be done. Their best dish was the bread baked on pan and embers, taken in the morning with *lassi* (buttermilk) and in the evening with herbs and different sorts of pulses. They indulged in this luxury when at full leisure; but when in a hurry they washed down their throat hastily parched vetches and tares and a handful of gram. A large quantity of milk was consumed daily, and in its season a good deal of sugar-cane was munched. Salt, chillies, onions and other condiments if available were also used. *Dalya*, made from bruised wheat, *jawar*, *makai*, and *khichri* made from *bajra mixed with mung ki dal* were the favourite dishes. It was considered better to make the bread one part of gram with two of wheat, salt being mixed with it. This was called '*missi*' or '*besni*.' The thick '*roti*' made from wheat alone was called '*pani ki roti*,' the thin made after rolling out was called '*phulka*.' Pickle (*achar*) and some rough *chatni* completed their ideal dish.

On the occasion of a marriage or other ceremony superior food was consumed, and a great deal of sugar in some form or other (*gur*, *shakkar*, *khand*) was used. *Gur*, when it was to be bought, was eaten as a luxury in the cold weather; but when it was prepared at the '*kohlu*,' it was turned to domestic use in the different stages of its making. The raw juice mixed with rice and milk was served up as a savoury dish by the good wife to her husband at his early morning meal. The '*karah prashad*,' consisting of equal portions of flour, sugar and clarified butter with water a double portion of the whole, was the consecrated food and was eaten at all religious ceremonies, and at the *pahul* when all those initiated ate from one dish.

With the exception of beef, they had no objection to a diet of flesh, fowl, or fish. The animal must be killed after the *jhatka* fashion, *i.e.* decapitation. *Jhatka* was not necessary when an animal was killed in sport. The necks of the birds were wrung, but those killed in sport were also accepted. Hunting of wild pigs was a favourite game. The Sikhs were, as they are up to the present day, remarkably fond of its flesh. They abhorred smoking tobacco, but intoxicated themselves with opium, *bhang*[1] and spirits of their country manufacture.[2]

[1]They prepare this drug by straining the juice from the seeds and stalks of a wild plant through a cloth; when ready for use it resembles green putrid water.

[2]George Thomas, 72.

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Men, women and children ate the same food. The full meal for a man was one kilogram.[1] The woman generally consumed as much as the man and no wonder, for a good Jat wife was by no means a lazy creature or devoid of muscle.

Dress

The Sikhs were simple and unostentatious in their dress. They generally wore undyed clothes made of home-spun cotton stuff. This consisted in the simplest form of three articles:—an ample turban of coarse cloth, of white or blue cotton, drawers (*kachha*) generally blue, and a kind of checkered plaid or blue cloth thrown loosely over the shoulders and coming down between the legs was confined round the waist by a belt of cotton. These with a pair of slippers made by the village cobbler, constituted the simple and inexpensive wardrobe of a Sikh for the greater part of the year. In winter he had a blanket of wool which usually cost Rs. 2 or a *duhar* or *chautahi*, a sheet of very thick cotton stuff, double wove. The chiefs were distinguished by wearing some heavy gold bracelets on their wrists, and sometimes a chain of the same metal bound round their turbans, being mounted on better horses, and equipped with better arms; otherwise, no distinction appeared amongst them.[2] On the occasion of a wedding a somewhat better dress was worn, and some colour was shown in the *pagri*, the white cloth being tied over one coloured yellow or some shade of red or green. Sometimes they affected these coloured *pagris* and the mixtures were often fanciful.

The Sikh women wore *pajamas*, called *suthan*, made of *susi*, coloured cotton stuff, and a *chadar* worn over the head and shoulders, either coloured in the case of young women, or uncoloured, made of *garha* or *dhotar*, thick or thin cloth according to the season. This upper garment when coloured was of dyed cloth or of *phulkari*, *i.e.* worked with silk flowers, or of *sitari*, another form of silk work; most women also wore a *kurta* or waistcoat. When going to another village they wore a *ghagra* or petticoat above the trousers, and a *choli* or bodice of coloured cloth.

[1]This quantity was considered sufficient even for a military man and the records of the Sikh army in the times of Maharajah Ranjit Singh corroborate this fact. Vide *Catalogue of the Khalsa Darbar Records*, I, 1919; *Ali-ud-din*, 358a-359a; *Asiatic Annual Register*, 1802, p. 10; *Tohfa-e-Panjab*, 4; *Calcutta Review*, 1875, p. 29; Colonel Polier's *Memoir*; Forster, I, 334; George Thomas, 72.

[2]Browne, Introduction, x.

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The everyday clothes were always prepared from the village-made cloth, which though rough proved very strong and durable. The ordinary dyes were indigo for blue and safflower for red and yellow.

Amusements

As a general rule, the Sikhs were manly, robust and vigorous and were passionately devoted to sports. The boys generally played *Gullidanda*,[1] and *Pitkaudi* or *Kabaddi*.[2] The men used with great dexterity wooden dumbbells which were enormously heavy and long. They also lifted and threw heavy weights. Both these amusements contributed a great deal to the uprightness of their carriage and fine figures. The game of *saunchi*,[3] too, was very popular.

The most universally popular sport was wrestling. At stated times in the year, large rural gatherings took place at some places to witness public matches. Prizes of horses, milch cows and scarfs were awarded to the best wrestlers.

Music, singing and dancing were all amusements much enjoyed by them, in particular at fairs. Dancing was generally performed by hired *nach* girls on the occasion of weddings or other festivities.

More intellectual amusement was sometimes found in listening to songs, sung by professional *mirasis* or *bhats*, a tribe of hereditary ballad singers, whose songs, ballads, and tales recited to the accompaniment of a fiddle or a tambourine, were in reality the favourite literature of the day. Occasionally a body of strolling acrobats visited a village and the people collected to see the exhibition. Snake charmers provided some recreation.

Women

The women were generally fine-looking, tall and graceful and their figures in youth were well-rounded and supple; but they were

[1]It is a game played with a stick and a spindle, which the players strike.

[2]In *kabaddi*, the party is divided into two sets each in their base, and when a man is sent by one set, one of the other set goes after him to touch him, and after touching him tries to get back to his own base. The other-man, however, having been touched, closes with him to prevent this.

[3]It requires a large open space. The players assemble and form two rings. One man from the outer ring falls out, runs backwards and forwards and is chased by one or two from the inner ring till he evades them and returns to his ring, or his opponents give in, or he is caught, when the same game is taken up by another set. The person chased may strike his opponents in the chest, or trip them up to prevent his being caught. *Lahore Gazetter*, p. 49.

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inferior in physique to the men probably from early marriage, frequency of pregnancy, poor diet and bad sanitary conditions. Their part was to guide the house. They ground corn, milked the cows and buffaloes, churned butter, cooked food, fetched water, span cotton for home consumption and attended to the sewing of family clothes, besides lending a hand to their husbands in the work of the field. The higher functions of the wife, however, were not unknown. She had a paramount influence in the household, by controlling the family purse and endeavouring in every way to prevent her husband from extravagance. Besides, she had the management of the family marriages; and if she was a clever woman her lord, if only for his own comfort, had to keep her in good humour.

In holiday times the women's garments were gay with many colours and a good deal of ostentation was displayed. A woman's social standing was greatly determined by her jewels[1] in which the spare capital was invested, as the money could always be realized on occasion of need. Great expenses were incurred on marriages. Private marriages were condemned, and were but seldom contracted.

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In the struggle of independence the Sikh women played no small part. They were splendid beings. They urged their husbands forward, even taking a part in the struggle themselves. Thus we could behold in them honour, heroism, faith, patriotism and liberty.

Fairs

The Sikhs were a lively and good-tempered people, fond of fairs, festivals and public assemblies. The principal fairs were the Diwali and Baisakhi, held at Amritsar in the months of November and April respectively. Two large fairs were held at Tran Taran, in March and August. Religious fairs were also held at Goindwal, Khadur, Derah Baba Nanak, and other Sikh Shrines. A big fair of Hola Mohalla was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Anandpur.

[1]The ornaments commonly worn were the same for all classes, except that Muslim women would not wear any on their heads. For a detailed account, Cf. 'Ali-ud-din, 360b-362a; *Ludhiana Gazetteer*, 53.

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CHAPTER 17

Mughlani Begam—The Viceroy of the Panjab (Date of birth unknown—Died, 1779)

Introduction

In the first decade of the second half of the eighteenth century, Mughlani Begam was the most outstanding figure in the politics of the Panjab. The Mughlani Begam belonged to the noblest Mughal family which controlled the entire Mughal Empire after Aurangzeb, and ruled over the Panjab for about forty years. She was a lady of remarkable address and daring, and played such an important part in the politics of the Panjab from 1753 to 1757 that she was the pivot round which centred all the political affairs of the country. Her diplomacy was vigorous and effective, steady and sturdy. She easily succeeded in achieving the object of her wishes. She possessed a powerful personality, and played a domineering role in all her dealings.[1] If she was not implicitly obeyed, coaxed or cajoled she was terrible in her wrath. Ambitious as she was she loved power, which sometimes exceeded the bounds of propriety. Her strong sexual urge instead of proving a great asset through a process of sublimation developed into a low passion. This demoralizing pleasure resulted in the weakening of her ambition, and ultimately in the destruction of her executive ability. All this ruined not only her own honour, prestige, position and even wealth, but also that of her husband, the father-in-law and the Delhi Empire. Her story is a tale of woe which befell the Panjab and Delhi alike. Born with a silver spoon in her mouth she died a pauper, as the wife of her own household servant.

Mughlani Begam was the wife of the celebrated viceroy of the Panjab, Muin-ul-Mulk (1748-53), popularly known as Mir Mannu and son of Nawab Qamar-ud-din-Khan, the Prime Minister of Delhi,

[1] *Imād-us-Saadat*, 34a-36a: Anand Ram, 304-5; *Maasir-ul-Umara*, III, 886; Shah Yusaf, 54b-55a; *Miftah-ul-Twarikh*, 316; *Tarikh-e-Imad-ul-Mulk*, 14.

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(1724-48). Her mother was Dardana Begam[1] who was the daughter of Nawab Abdus Samad Khan, viceroy of the Panjab from 1713 to 1726, and real sister of Nawab Zakariya Khan, who ruled over Panjab from 1726 to 1745. Her father was Jani Khan, a leading noble at the Lahore Court.[2]

Her original name appears to have been Surayya Begam. In her husband's family she was given the name of Murad Begam in accordance with Indian custom. Popularly she was known as the Mughlani Begam.

Death of Muin-ul-Mulk, 3rd November, 1753

Muin-ul-Mulk, after his victory over Ahmad Shah Abdali in March, 1748, was appointed by the dying Muhammad Shah to the viceroyalty of the Panjab. In view of his vigorous character, it was expected that he would check further inroads of the Afghan invader, and he would be able to crush the Sikhs, who had been steadily acquiring power. If Muhammad Shah had ever displayed any far-sighted statesmanship, it was in ordering Muin's appointment to the Panjab, the frontier province of the Mughal Empire, then liable to foreign peril and internal insecurity.

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During the short period of Muin's office from 1748 to 1753, Ahmad Shah led two invasions, in 1749 and 1751. On these two occasions the Mughal Viceroy fought single-handed, without receiving any assistance whatsoever from his master at Delhi. The second invasion lasted four months, and ultimately Muin was defeated. But his pleasing personality, ready wit and frankness of manners saved him his life and office. Abdali confirmed him in his post, under his own suzerainty, and retired to Afghanistan.

Muin was equally successful in checking the power of the Sikhs. He maintained a continuous campaign against them, and almost brought their lawless activities to an end. But he suddenly died on 3rd November, 1753, in the prime of life, under rather suspicious circumstances. The eye-witness, Miskin to whom we shall have again to refer frequently in these pages and who, at that time, was in attendance upon Muin, gives a remarkable description of his death, the revolt of the soldiery and the Begam's cleverness.

[1]Vide genealogical table.

[2]The family hailed from Turkistan, the homeland of the Mughal Emperors.

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The Begam's adroitness

"Nawab Sahib (Muin-ul-Mulk) stayed for some time at village Tilakpur, on the bank of the river (Ravi) eight *kos* (25 kms) from Lahore. One day, at this place, in the month of Muharram he mounted a horse to go for hunting. A little while before he had sent out Khwajah Mirza Khan, with a few other Mughalia Jamadars to repress the Sikhs. On his return from hunting he halted in a fort which had been built by him in village Awan,[1] 16 kms north-east of Lahore. This fort was garrisoned by foot-soldiers permanently stationed in it. He took his meal there at midday and had a siesta. He got up when about three hours of the day remained (about 3 p.m.). By chance his armlet of nine gems which always remained tied up on the arm broke off and the gems fell upon the floor. I brought this fact to his notice. He picked up the gems himself and made them over to an official. He then attended the call of nature, washed himself and said his afternoon prayer. Afterwards he put on a vilayti satin dress of green colour, mounted a horse and came out of the fort. Just then Khwajah Mirza presented himself before him with a few Sikh heads. He gave away prizes to the men who had cut off the heads and turned his attention towards his own troops."[2]

Muin-ul-Mulk put his horse to a gallop over an open field to join his troops which lay encamped at a short distance. All of a sudden he was taken ill. The doctors tried their best to bring about his recovery, but he died a little after midnight. The strange thing was that the colour of his body from face to chest had turned blue. This sad occurrence caused a heart-rending crying and bewailing in the whole army. The court chronicler of Delhi recorded: "Muin always waged war with the Sikhs, the worshippers of Nanak. He was a valiant hero. His presence in Lahore, the frontier on that side of the country where there was the permanent problem of expelling Ahmad Abdali, was a great satisfaction. But there is no remedy against fate that such a famous and experienced viceroy should die in that province leaving it without a chief."[3] The troops had been in arrears for some time. They demanded clearance of their dues on the spot, and would not allow Muin's body to be removed to Lahore. Miskin says:

[1]Ali-ud-din, 112.
[2]Miskin, Tahmas Khan, *Tazkira*, 87-8.
[3]*Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 257-58.

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At this time the Begam Sahiba entrusting the body of the Nawab to the custody of some reliable persons opened the doors of the treasury and kept herself busy for three days and nights in paying wages to the soldiers.[1] On the fourth day Bhikari Khan said that he would take the Nawab's corpse to Delhi, while the Begam insisted on taking it to Lahore. This led to a quarrel between them. Bhikari Khan thereupon appointed 500 of his men to guard the corpse and raised the standard of rebellion. The Begam was surprised at his conduct and she summoned all the chiefs before her. Accordingly, all the Indian sardars came and rendered submission to her; but the Mughalia troops had been seduced by Bhikari Khan to his side. The Begam therefore sent for Qasim Khan who was ordered to win over the Mughalia troops by any means he could. Qasim Khan said that he would bring all the captains (of the Mughalias) by promising them favours, but in his absence the corpse was to be guarded. The Begam posted me and my companions on this duty. On our arrival, Bhikari Khan's guard left the corpse and departed, and we took up our position there. Meanwhile Qasim Khan brought all the Mughals to wait upon the Begam; but Khwajah Mirza remained on the side of Bhikari Khan with 300 horsemen. The Begam then marched to Lahore (with the corpse) and entered the city.[2] Muin was buried near Shahidganj and a tomb was constructed there.

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The Baby-Viceroy provided for the Panjab, January, 1754

The news of Muin's death reached Delhi on the 12th November and Emperor Ahmad Shah on the 13th November appointed his three-year-old son Mahmud Khan the Viceroy of the two provinces of Lahore and Multan. The robes of honour were conferred on the Prince in the Diwan-e-Khas and quite in the fitness of things, the three-year-old baby-warden of the north-western

[1]Khushwaqt Rae, 88.

[2]Miskin, 89-90. Cf. *Farah Bakhsh*, 33b. *Khazana-e-Amira*, 98; *Haqiqat*, 28; *Siyar*, III, 50; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 89a; Khushwaqt Rae, 88; Ahmad Shah, 869; *Ahwal-e-Adina-Beg Khan*, 54b; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 9; *Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 156; Sarkar, I, 437. "He (Muin) was buried near Shahid Ganj where the remains of his tomb may still be seen. In the reign of Sher Singh, the Sikhs in a moment of religious frenzy, dismantled the building, dug out the remains of Mir Mannu and scattered them to the winds." *Lahore District Gazetteer*, 1883-4, p.28.

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marches was provided with a two-year-old[1] deputy in the person of Muhammad Amin, son of Muin-ul-Mulk, for whom a khilat and jewels were sent through Mir Jamil-ud-din Khan. The actual administration was placed under the control of Mumin Khan, but the real control lay in the hands of the Begam.[2]

The Panjab had formed a part of the Afghan kingdom since 1752. So the Viceroy derived his real power from Ahmad Shah Abdali and not from Ahmad Shah of Delhi. The Begam was not satisfied at receiving a formal nomination from Delhi. In order to retain her son in office she looked up to the Durrani Emperor for confirmation. The Deputy Mumin Khan was also not certain of retaining his office until he had received formal orders from the Afghan King. Both of them therefore offered their submission to Jahan Khan, the Governor of Peshawar, who then lay encamped at Hasan Abdal, requesting him to secure approval of his master at Kandhar. As a result of these negotiations, Ahmad Shah Durrani appointed Muhammad Amin Khan Governor of the Panjab and Mumin Khan his Deputy about the end of January, 1754. This occasion was celebrated with great rejoicing.[3]

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Bhikari Khan's revolt, January, 1754

The petticoat government was not going to be a smooth sailing business. Bhikari Khan, surnamed Raushan-ud-daulah Rustam-e-Jang, was a Turkish general. He was "the dearest friend and most trusted factotum of Muin," and centre of all affairs in the

[1] *Haqiqat*, 28, states that Muin's son was only one year old.

[2] *Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 257-8. The author in lamentation observed: "O the Marvel! Such weakness on the part of a sovereign who wore the crown of the realm of Hindustan and whose coins were current throughout the land." Cf. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, 439.

It was "a plain proof of the miserable state of affairs at Delhi, that in such difficult times children and women were thought capable of being entrusted with places of such high importance." Baron Hugel's *Travels*, 265.

[3] *Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 282-3; *Siyar*, III, 50; *Tarikh-e Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 156; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 89a; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 98; *Irshad-ul-Mustqim*, 295a; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 111.

Francklin in his *History of the Reign of Shah Aulum*, p. 5, states:

"Mohimool Moolk, the *subahdar* of Lahore, received a fall from his horse in hunting, which put an end to his life. His begum, a lady of great spirit, had interest enough amongst the chiefs of the province to procure their nomination of her to the *subahdaree* in the place of her deceased husband."

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province during his regime.[1] He had expected that he would be nominated the Deputy Governor. Being disappointed in his ambition, and seeing his rival Mumin Khan in power, he was naturally stung to fury. He approached the Delhi Wazir, Intizam-ud-daulah, the brother of the Begam's husband, who was opposed to his sister-in-law. He granted the Deputy Governorship to Bhikari Khan under his own signatures, but the Mughlani Begam refused to recognise this order.[2]

He made up his mind to seize the government of the Panjab for himself by force. He gave up attending the court, began collecting troops, mostly the turbulent Afghans of Kasur, mounted guns on the terrace of his house and openly defied the authority of the Begam.[3] In order to show that he wielded the real power, and to obtain wealth, he seized money from people in every possible way. With a view to perpetuate his memory, and probably to win over the favour of Muslims, he built at Lahore a mosque, known as Sunahri Masjid which stands as a monument of him to the present day. A poet wrote the following verse secretly on the gate of the mosque:

Binā kard masjid Bhikāri Khān Balisht
zar az zindā bigarift wa az murdāh khisht

[Bhikari Khan Balisht built a mosque, by seizing money from the living and bricks from the dead]. The Nawab read the verse, fell into a rage, and ordered for the execution of the poet, on whom no search could lay hands.[4]

The masterful Begam could not tolerate the refractory attitude of such a powerful court noble, whose success would have nipped her ambition in the bud. She cunningly seduced the Mughalia captains of the army to her side by increasing their salary and conferring titles upon them.[5] She even succeeded in breaking Khwajah Mirza Khan from Bhikari Khan's party by appointing him to the charge of Eminabad district. Then a plot was hatched. Khwajah Mirza Khan suddenly entered Lahore and arrested Bhikari Khan. He was closely confined in the Begam's palace under the guard of Khwajah Said Khan.[6]

[1] *Siyar*, III, 51. "Mukhtar wa madarulmahām Sarkar Muin-ul-Mulk bud." *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 9; Sarkar, I, 439.
[2] *Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 318, 337; Sarkar, II, 52; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 111
[3] Miskin, 91.
[4] Sohan Lal, I, 139.
[5] Miskin, 91.
[6] Miskin, 91-2; Ghulam Ali, 26; *Siyar*, III, 61; *Husain Shahi*, 34; *Khazana-e-*

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Qasim Khan's appointed at Patti, c. March, 1754

The standard of Bhikari Khan's rebellion had not yet been fully suppressed, when another hazard threatened the Mughlani Begam. The utter weakness of the Delhi Empire and the rule of a woman so emboldened the Turki generals in Lahore that each of them regarded himself capable of carving out an independent principality, and maintaining it with the help of his tribesmen from Central Asia, and the Sikh soldiers of the Panjab. They felt that their own rule would be worthier and more conducive to the safety and happiness of their retainers and subjects than the anarchy which prevailed in Lahore from Mughlani Begam's government.[1]

Qasim Khan was a Turk who had enlisted himself as a soldier in the service of Muin. He rose to the position of a Jamadar and was the first to render valuable service to the Mughlani Begam against Bhikari Khan. Consequently, he was appointed by her to the faujdari of Patti parganah in Lahore district. Qasim Khan, who was lovingly called by the Mughlani Begam as her son, was provided with some pieces of cannon, 300 jizairchis who were Badakhshanis just arrived in the Panjab to seek their livelihood, 100 Turki cavalry, a few thousand horse and foot and several thousand rupees in cash at the time of his appointment.[2]

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Qasim Khan's encounters with the Sikhs, only three Sikhs drove away the whole Mughal force

Qasim Khan secured permission from the Begam to take Tahmas Khan Miskin in his train. Qasim Khan made the first day's halt at Kot Lakhpat, two kos from Lahore, where Miskin joined him the next day. Just at this place began the Faujdar's encounters with the Sikhs who had been rising to power for some time past.[3] This account is reproduced here in the words of Miskin:

"Qasim Khan left Lahore and encamped at the garden of Lakhpat Rae, at a distance of two kos. The following day we also joined him at the garden. He gave us a warm reception and presented to each as a mark of hospitality two gold coins to be spent

Amira, 99; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 89a; Khushwaqt Rae, 89; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 131. *Haqiqat*, 28, states that on the death of Muin-ul-Mulk two parties, Mughals and Hindustanis, came into existence in Lahore. The former revolted against the authority of the Begam, while the latter supported her.

[1]Sarkar, II, 52.

[2]Miskin, 93; Sarkar, II, 52-3.

[3]Ali-ud-din, 117a.

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at a dance in the night. By chance the same day an encounter with the Sikhs took place. The people insisted very much on his taking the initiative in attacking the wretches and putting them to the sword so that they might be extirpated; but Qasim Khan did not agree. In the evening we came back and entered our camps. Just then the Sikhs came fighting from behind and reached near our camps. Then they returned and we passed the night (in suspense). On the following day we marched towards Patti and encamped at a Mughal village named Damodran [Dadupur, 32 kms from Patti on the road to Lahore] at a distance of 12 kos. The headmen and people of the place came to pay their respects. All were captured and put under arrest. The fort and village were plundered. The village was besieged on the plea that the people were in league with the Sikhs. We lay encamped there for a month, and none of their women or children who had been imprisoned was set at liberty. The Sikhs attacked us daily both the times (morning and evening), fought and retired.

"After a few days Qasim Khan appointed one of his brothers named Alim Beg Khan, at the head of 1,000 horse and foot to lead an attack on a village where the Sikhs had assembled. The Sikhs got ready, and the fight began. The perseverance of Alim Beg Khan gave way. Finding himself unequal to the task he returned, giving up all his 300 Badakhshani foot soldiers to slaughter. On learning this news, Qasim Khan mounted and started for the place. I also accompanied by two horsemen followed and joined him at a distance of two kos. I saw that the men were coming back running (from the field). I found my fellow tribesmen, Muhammad Aqil, etc., who had joined the attack safe and sound. We proceedcd farther. I was astonished to see that only three Sikh horsemen were driving away the whole force. I galloped after them for one kos. I came across a large number of men lying dead on the way. But Muhammad Aqil dragged me back after a great persistence. We reached our troops safely. The next day I gave a piece of advice to Qasim Khan; but he did not agree and some hot words passed between us. Thereupon I came back to Lahore."

Qasim Khan recruited 8,000 Sikhs in his army

Tahmas Khan Miskin continues his narrative: "After a few days he marched back from this place without achieving anything and

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having suffered from extreme hardships and difficulties. He halted on the bank of the river (Ravi), five kos from Lahore. I went to see him. He said, 'I have won over 8,000 Sikhs by friendly negotiations. I will soon seize Lahore, and then after enlisting more troops will take Delhi and will make myself Padshah.' He offered Chancellorship to a penniless Khwajah, the fugitive ex-faujdar of Saharanpur and the Imperial Paymaster Generalship to me, a lad of fifteen only. I told him that such a useless talk did not become him, and that he would repent of it in a few days. After five days he left the place and encamped outside the city (Lahore) near Shah Balawal. I again visited him. He had nothing left with him. He had uselessly distributed thousands of rupees worth of matchlocks, bows, other arms and materials and gifts to his Sikh allies, while his own troops clamoured for their pay. They besieged him and insulted him. The same day they cut off his tent ropes, dragged him to the Begam who confined him within her palace enclosure and kept him under strict guard."[1]

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Muhammad Amin Khan dies, May, 1754

The Begam had succeeded in removing the threat of a civil war, but another catastrophe soon befell her. The baby-governor Muhammad Amin Khan died in May, displaying the same symptoms of poisoning as his father.[2] The Begam at once proclaimed herself the head of the government of the province. She despatched her agents to Kandhar as well as to Delhi to procure her acknowledgment to the governorship. Her only probable opponent to her appointment was Imad-ul-Mulk, the Delhi Wazir to whom her daughter had been betrothed by Muin. Her messengers reached there at the time when Emperor Ahmad Shah was busy in his struggle with Imad-ul-Mulk, and so he could not pay any attention to the Panjab affairs. His successor Alamgir II appointed Mumin Khan the Governor of the Panjab on the 25th October, 1754, but his authority was negatived by the Begam in whose hands lay all the strings of power.[3]

Misgovernment of the Begam

Mughlani Begam securely established herself in the seat of the

[1]Miskin, 94-6.

[2]This news reached Delhi on the 2nd June, 1754 *Delhi Chronicle*, 92.

[3]Miskin, 93-7; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 111.

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provincial government for the time being. But those were not the times when a woman viceroy could display much activity in controlling the affairs of administration. The reasons were that the Turkish nobles would not bear the idea of a woman's rule.[1] Secondly, the whole province was in a state of utter chaos and confusion. Eunuchs were the only medium through whom Mughlani Begam conducted the state affairs, and therefore it became to all intents and purposes eunuchs' rule at Lahore.[2] The Diwan, Bakhshi and other high officials first went in the morning to Mumin Khan to offer their salams and then all including the Deputy proceeded to the deorhi (portico) of the Begam's palace, and received her orders through eunuchs. Three eunuchs, Mian Khushfaham, Mian Arjmand and Mian Mahabbat, took the lead in these discussions and became her chief confidants in all affairs, great and small. Matters were made worse by the fact that these eunuchs seldom agreed among themselves, and constantly quarrelled. "Owing to the widow regent's simplicity each officer represented affairs to her in a different way."[3]

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The result was that the administration fell into disorder, and disturbances raised their head everywhere. The government of the province had visibly broken up. Multan was under a separate governor of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Chahar Mahal of Aurangabad (Jehlam), Gujrat, Sialkot and Pasrur were ruled over by Rustam Khan directly appointed by the Durrani. The northern districts of Amritsar, Batala, Kalanaur and Pathankot were the strongholds of the Sikhs. Adina Beg Khan was supreme in the Jullundur Doab and he acknowledged no authority. The country between the Satluj and the Jamuna was under the Delhi Emperor. The only districts which owed allegiance to the Lahore Governor were situated in its close neighbourhood, and these were about to be occupied by various Mughalia captains.[4]

[1] *Maasir-ul-Umara*, I, 360; Cf. Miskin, 108. Even her great ally and maternal uncle Khwajah Abdullah hesitated to accept her authority.

[2] Miskin, 93. 'Dar guftah-e-Khwajahsaraiyan har kuja shud pesh raft, Ki barayad kam-e-mardan zan fariq-e-namurad.'

[3] ibid, 98. "Eunuchs and slaves ruled the State. The peasants were in more ruinous condition than before. The administration fell into disorder and decay and the number of Sikhs increased in consequence." *Siyar*, III, 51; Sarkar, I, 440.

[4] Khushwaqt Rae, 89.

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Profligacy of the Begam

No sooner did the Begam find herself safely installed in the office of the provincial viceroy than she began to betray the commonest of human frailties. The Begam became notorious for loose character. In this conduct she was probably led by the shameless examples of the highest dignitaries at Delhi and Lahore, each of whom possessed numerous wives and concubines and a number of hand some boys. Besides she was herself highly voluptuous. The talk of her clandestine love affair with Ghazi Beg Khan Bakhshi was on the lips of everybody, big and small, in Lahore.[1] Her name was connected with the young 15-16 year old lad Miskin, our valuable informant, by an aunt of Ghazi-ud-din Imad-ul-Mulk, the Delhi Wazir, who intended to kill the page; but Miskin escaped through the Begam's assistance.[2] It was not a false charge because the Begam really loved Miskin and tried her best, though in vain, to seduce him by offering temptations of costly gifts, and keeping him in her bed-chamber during whole nights, the full story of which is described by Miskin himself in the pages of his manuscript.[3] Some other contemporary writers also testify to this fact.[4]

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Revolt of Khwajah Mirza Khan, c. December, 1754

The courtiers of Lahore ignoring their own sexual excesses, were not going to tolerate the loose morals of a woman so highly placed in life. Fresh revolts broke out against the Begam's authority.

Khwajah Mirza Khan, an Uzbak chief, had possessed complete confidence of his late master Muin-ul Mulk and was often given independent charge of expeditions against the Sikhs. He commanded a personal contingent of 300[5] Uzbaks besides many others. On Muin's death he had joined the party of Bhikari Khan, but was soon enticed by the imperious Begam who had conferred upon him the faujdari of Eminabad with the title of Khan. Here the Khwajah asserted his personality, crushed all opposition, "chastized the Sikhs in

[1]Miskin, 99.

[2]ibid, 122.

[3]Cf. ibid, 99, 122, 159-60, 230, 231.

"B'aze shab ta alaiulsubah az hazur Begam Sahiba rihai name shud. Balak aksar b'aze sakhunha ki 'aqal hargiz qabul nakunad bar zaban me awurdand."

[4]Ghlam-Ali of Lahore. 26; Shiv Prasad, 39b; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 98-9.

[5]Five or six thousand fresh Turki troops had joined him from his homeland under one of his brothers Khwajah Qazi. Miskin, 105.

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several engagements,"[1] and established peace and order in his territory.

The Captive Bhikari Khan entered into communication with Khwajah Muhammad Said Khan, the brother of Khwajah Mirza, and decided that "as a fissure had appeared in the honour of the late Nawab,"[2] the best course for them was to call Khwajah Mirza Khan to take over charge of the administration of the province.

Consequently he came to Lahore, won over the Begam's soldiers already corrupted by Khwajah Said, confined her in another house and emptied her palace of all cash, jewels, ornaments, clothes and other things. His soldiers so thoroughly sacked several places that not a piece of furniture or any other article was left in the houses plundered by them.[3] Khwajah Mirza brought the Begam to her palace and appointed his own soldiers at the gate. "At that time I (Miskin), and Muhammad Aqil dressed in a coat of arms went to the portico of the Begam and conveyed an oral message through a eunuch that Khwajah Mirza and Bhikari Khan were sitting together, and if they were ordered they would kill both of them instantly with one stroke." They were forbidden to carry out such a plan. On the following morning the Purabia (Oudh) foot soldiers, about seven or eight thousand in number, attacked the Mirza's troops, but they were repulsed after some struggle. The Mughlani Begam was removed from her official residence and confined in her mother's house.[4]

Khwajah Mirza utterly failed in effectively controlling the administration, in securing sufficient revenues, and in checking the forces of disruption among his fellow tribesmen.[5] Khwajah Mirza Khan declared himself Nawab (Subahdar), put a studded aigrette on his head and granted titles of Khan and khilats to his comrades, the Mughal captains. Ashur Ali Khan came to offer salaams to Khawajah Mirza after eight days. Even Bhikari Khan waited upon him. The other Mughalia sardars, such as Bala Bash Khan, Farman Beg Khan, Ibrahim Quli Khan, Ismail Khan and Haji Khan Jar and others, who had been his equals in rank and position and quite independent of each other caring nothing for anybody also came to pay their respects, and produced all the documents before him for orders and signature. After a few days their mutual jealousy and

[1]Miskin, 102. Dar nur-e-Nawab maghfur rakhna padid amad.
[2]ibid, 99.
[3]ibid, 103.
[4]ibid.
[5]ibid, 104.

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enmity began to reappear. In spite of their repeated promises of friendship and unity at dinners and entertainments of dancing-girls they soon gave way to disagreement. Consequently the local chiefs and rebels became quite independent in their own spheres of activity.[1] He, however, took effective measures in punishing the Sikhs. His brother Khwajah Qazi with his 6,000 troops was despatched after them and defeated them.[2]

Bhikari Khan is put to death, April, 1755

The Mughlani Begam finding herself ousted from authority and a captive burned with rage against Khwajah Mirza and Bhikari Khan, the real instruments of her ruin. She cleverly managed to depute her ambassador to the court of Kandhar. Khwajah Abdullah Khan, her mother's brother and the son of the former Viceroy Abdus Samad Khan and the brother of the late Nawab Zakariya Khan, went to Ahmad Shah Abdali's court and complained against the Mughalia nobles who had been responsible for all the misrule, tumult and disorder, in the Panjab since Muin's death. He obtained an order on Aman Khan, brother of Jahan Khan the Durrani Governor of Peshawar, to march to Lahore at the head of 10,000 troops and restore the Begam to authority. Khwajah Mirza was easily overpowered and imprisoned with most of his nobles. Lahore was given over to plunder and was thoroughly sacked.[3] About forty lakhs of rupees were obtained in this way. The Begam was installed on the gaddi and Khwajah Abdullah was appointed her deputy.

Bhikari Khan was made over to the Mughlani Begam. He was bound hand and foot and was produced before the Begam. Under her orders he was severely beaten with shoes and cudgels and the eunuchs striking him blow after blow cried out, "The blood of the two (Muin and Amin) is on you. This is your due recompense for it."[4] When he was about to faint, he was wounded in two places with a dagger by the Begam personally. At last he expired[5] under

[1]Cf. Sarkar, II, 56.

[2]Miskin (present in these campaigns), 105.

[3]ibid, 107; Khushwaqt Rae, 89.

[4]Miskin, 107.

[5]James Browne in his *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks* on p. 18 writes: 'In the year of the Hegira 1165, Moin-ul Mullock died, and his widow appointed one Beckery Khan, to manage the government of her deceased husband, as Naib (or deputy) on her part: but having detected him in a design to seize on her person and usurp the government himself, she caused him to be strangled.'

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the operation and his corpse was thrown outside the city into a ditch.[1]

Khwajah Abdullah ousts the Begam, c. July, 1755

Aman Khan had carried away the turbulent Mughalia nobles including Khwajah Mirza to Kandhar. Khwajah Abdullah finding no rival in Lahore, employed 15 to 20 thousand horse and foot and assumed an independent attitude. The Begam could not be thwarted so easily and she seduced Abdullah's soldiery on promise of rewards and higher pay. Abdullah, with the help of Mir Mumin and the Durrani agent Hadi Khan, succeeded in confining the Begam to her mother's house and thus became the undisputed master of Lahore. He badly needed funds to keep his soldiery satisfied. The treasury did not bring him much and therefore he resorted to tyranny and oppression of all sorts in exacting money from the people. "Closing the gates of the city, he plundered much from the inhabitants of Lahore both Hindus and Muslims, on the plea of their having been associates of Bhikari Khan, and slew many people. Vast numbers were ruined. Grain and other stuffs became very dear."[2]

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Adina Beg Khan captures Lahore, c. September, 1755

In the meantime Adina Beg Khan, the Governor of the Jullundur Doab, had firmly established himself in that territory, and owed allegiance neither to Lahore Government under which he was politically placed, nor to the Delhi sovereign. He had recently (April, 1755) defeated Qutb Khan Rohilla who had revolted against the Delhi Emperor and had seized upon the Sarhind province, and thus Adina Beg had become the supreme master of the country situated between the Beas and the Jamuna.[3]

Lahore also offered a favourable opportunity and Adina Beg was not the man to let it slip. The provincial capital was in the throes of revolution. Khwajah Abdullah's rule was hated by all. So Adina

[1]Miskin, 106-8; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 112; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 99; *Haqiqat*, 28; *Siyar*, II, 51; Ghulam Ali (Bhikari Khan's son and the author of *Shah Alam Namah*), 26; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 89a; Khushwat Rae, 89; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 9; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 131; Sohan Lal, I, 139; Ali-ud-din, 113a; Sarkar, II, 56-7.

[2]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 112; Miskin, 109-10; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 99; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 89a; Sohan Lal, I, 139-40; Sarkar, II, 57-8.

[3]For details see *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 76-88; *Delhi Chronicle*, 122; *Chahar Gulzar-e-Shujai*, 461a; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 98b-99a; *Adwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 56b-57a.

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Beg led his army against Lahore. Khwajah Abdullah fled away to Multan without offering any resistance. Adina Beg captured the capital, appointed Sadiq Beg Khan his deputy and himself returned to Jullundur.[1]

Mughlani Begam is made captive by the Delhi Wazir, March, 1756

Mughlani Begam could not bear the loss of her political power. She was very resourceful. Feeling the need for immediate assistance she turned her attention to the all-powerful Delhi Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk, who had been betrothed to her daughter in Muin's lifetime. She wrote to him: "Ahmad Shah Durrani helped me when oppressed from Kandhar. I have again fallen into misfortune. Please come and help me. Otherwise at least send a force in any way you can, and summon my daughter who is betrothed to you."[2]

The Mughalia chiefs fled from Lahore to Delhi to complain to Prime Minister Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Khan against the Begam's oppression and libertinism. They represented that the Mughalia prestige was being ruined and the Begam wished to offer her daughter to Ahmad Shah Durrani's son.

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Imad-ul-Mulk welcomed this oppportunity of having an occasion to interfere in the Panjab affairs and settle matters in his own way. He knew that the Begam was mismanaging the affairs. She was also known for having fallen into an evil course of life.[3] The Wazir was facing financial breakdown, and badly needed money which he thought might be procurable in Lahore. He also wanted to regain the lost province for the empire. Although he did not care much for the Begam's daughter, as he was already married to the greatest beauty of the day, Ganna Begam;[4] but he had no objection to

[1]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 124.

[2]Miskin, 113-4.

[3]*Haqiqat*, 28-9.

[4]Ganna Begam was the daughter of Ali Quli Khan, a *seven-hazari* noble in the court of Alamgir II. Ganna's unrivalled beauty, poetical talents and artistic accomplishments had made her famous in this court. Her hand was sought by the greatest grandees, Shuja-ud-daulah, the Nawab Wazir of Oudh, Imad-ul-Mulk, the grand Wazir of Delhi and Raja Jawahir Singh of Bharatpur, and all tried to secure her. She was persuaded, however, to marry Imad. This unhappy choice ruined her life. She fell under the wrath of the Mughlani Begam, whose daughter had been betrothed to Imad. Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1757 handed over Ganna to Mughlani Begam. who reduced her to a maid-servant Cf. Sarkar. II, 108-9.

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make one more addition to his harem without lawfully marrying her.[1]

The Wazir did not like to raise an alarm. He pretended to go on a hunting expedition to the jungles of Hansi and Hissar. He left Delhi on the 15th January, 1756 in the company of Prince Ali Gauhar with a force of ten thousand. On the 7th February, 1756, he reached Sarhind where his further progress was stopped by Adina Beg Khan who wrote to him: "Please stay at Sarhind. Send to me a eunuch with two or three thousand troops. I will add my own contingent to them, and will secure you possession of Lahore easily by a stratagem. There is also a large army in Lahore. If you go there, it may cause tumult and a rising."[2]

Accordingly, Imad-ul-Mulk sent eunuch Nasim Khan at the head of a few thousand troops and himself stayed at Machhiwara[3] on the bank of the Satluj. "Adina Beg Khan despatched Sadiq Beg Khan with 10,000 troops of his own to help the Wazir. All these soldiers combined arrived at Lahore in a few days. They were housed at Shah Ganj. From here they rode out in full splendour and pomp to the Begam's residence to offer their salaams. On returning they paid a visit of courtesy to Khwajah Abdullah Khan. The Khwajah, in accordance with the court etiquette, conferred upon him Sadiq Beg Khan, the leader of the expedition a khilat and afterwards came to the troops. Nawab Abdullah Khan guessed that in a day or two he would be captured and being frightened he left the city the same night and fled away to Jammu hills.[4]

On the following day the Mughlani Begam triumphantly occupied her official residence and took the reins in her hands once more. The Wazir's letter was delivered to her in which he had requested the Begam to send him her daughter. The Begam was pleased with the request. She took nearly a month in making preparations for the departure of her daughter Umda Begam, "the pearl of unrivalled beauty and accomplishments,"[5] and sent her with a suitable dowry in jewels and cash accompanied by a full household of eunuchs,

[1]Ghulam Ali, 25; Ali-ud-din, 113a; Khair-ud-din's *Ibrat Namah* in Elliot, VIII, 240.

[2]Miskin, 114; *Delhi Chronicle*, 130; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 52; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 98b; *Maasir-ul-Umara*, III, 890.

[3]Machhiwara is a town situated on the route from Ludhiana to Rupar 35 kms east of the former place.

[4]Miskin, 114; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 151.

[5]Sohan Lal, I, 140.

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tents and other necessary requisites at the head of an escort of 3,000 troops. The bride arrived at the camp of the Wazir on the 4th March, 1756.[1]

The next step of the Wazir was to despatch Sayyid Jamil-ud-din Khan, Nisar Muhammad Khan Sher-e-Jang, Hakim Ibadullah Khan and Khwajah Saadat Yar Khan to Adina Beg in order to fetch the Begam also to his camp. The Wazir did not like that she being a Muslim woman should do the work of man. Moreover she was the wife of his mother's brother[2] besides being his prospective mother-in-law and he was of opinion that the loss of her character was due to her unbridled freedom at Lahore. Above all he coveted her wealth.[3]

These officers, strengthened by Adina's troops, covered the distance of 200 kms in one day and night, hardly stopping to take breath and reached Lahore at daybreak, when the Mughlani Begam was fast asleep, unsuspicious of what lay in store for her. They sent eunuchs to wake her and putting her in a palankeen they carried her to their camp outside Lahore and confiscated all her treasure and property. She reached the Wazir's camp on the 28th March, 1756. The Wazir came to receive her. Hurt by the treatment she had received, she let loose her tongue and in a loud voice reviled and abused the Wazir, saying, "This conduct of yours will bring distress upon the realm, destruction to Delhi and disgrace to the nobles and the state. Ahmad Shah Durrani will soon avenge this disgraceful act and punish you."[4] The Wazir gave the government of Lahore and Multan to Adina Beg Khan for a tribute of thirty lakhs a year, appointed Sayyid Jamil-ud-din Khan to Lahore as Adina's assistant and afterwards he returned to the imperial capital on the 9th May, 1756.[5]

Khwajah Abdullah installed in Lahore, 4th October, 1756

Sayyid Jamil-ud-din was assigned 5,000 troops by Adina Beg Khan on paper, but the actual master was much lower. The Sayyid

[1]Miskin, 114-6 and 119; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 130-1; Shakir, 79-80; *Siyar*, III, 53; *Delhi Chronicle*, 131; Sarkar, II, 60.

[2]*Tarikh-e-Imad-ul-Mulk*, 14.

[3]Ghulam Ali, 25.

[4]Khair-ud-din, 42.

[5]Miskin, 120-4; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 131; *Delhi Chronicle*, 131-2; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 52; *Maasir-ul-Umara*, III, 89-91; Siyar, III, 53; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 98b; Ghulam Ali, 26-7; Shiv Prashad, 33b; Shakir, 79-80; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 71a-b;

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though circumscribed by such a small contingent and an empty treasure tried his best to establish peace and order in the country.[1] He sought to lower the unfairly enhanced price of grain by publicly flogging the headman of the market.[2] He was a man of courage and spirit. "Once or twice I saw with my own eyes," says Miskin, "that he went on a hunting expedition towards village Sharaqpur where ten or fifteen thousand Sikhs appeared and fell on him. He commanded only about one thousand horse and foot. With this small number he stuck fast to his ground and repelled the Sikhs."[3]

His rule, however, was short-lived. Khwajah Abdullah Khan went from Jammu to Kandhar and came back with a strong force of Abdali troops under Jangbaz Khan who also brought with him Khwajah Mirza and other Mughalia Jamadars retained as captives in the Durrani court.[4] "Adina Beg Khan, faujdar of the Doab, had entered into an agreement with Sayyid Jamil-ud-din Khan that in case of an emergency he would supply him with 10 or 15 thousand troops and their pay. At the time of the approach of Durrani troops the Sayyid sought help from the Khan who replied that in view of the large Durrani army it was advisable for him to retire to the Doab where both of them would act with mutual consultation. The Nawab followed his advice and left the place. I, Miskin, also left all my goods and property in Lahore and taking women only accompanied him."[5]

All the citizens of Lahore fled away with or without porters in company with Jamil and a great calamity (ajab hadisa) befell the city.[6] The invaders entered Lahore on the 4th October, 1756. Khwajah Abdullah Khan was given charge of the province with Khwajah Mirza as his assistant. The city was thoroughly plundered and laid waste by the Afghans.[7] But the new chiefs were not allowed to enjoy undisturbed possession of the Lahore province. They were constantly harassed by the Sikhs, and regular expeditions were sent after them under the leadership of Khwajah Mirza. When

Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan, 156; Bakhtmal, 76; Sohan Lal, I, 139-40; *Gulistan-e-Rahmat*, 51; Ali-ud-din, 113a-114a; Sarkar, II, 60-1.

[1]Cf. Bakhtmal, 76; Khushwaqt Rae, 90; Sohan Lal, I, 140.

[2]Sarkar, II, 61.

[3]Miskin, 124.

[4]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 151-2.

[5]Miskin, 125.

[6]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 152.

[7]Sarkar, II, 63.

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Miskin returned from Jullundur to Lahore to take his goods and property he found Khwajah Mirza out on one of such expeditions to Eminabad.[1]

Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India, 1756-57

Constant reports of the utter wretchedness of the Delhi government were reaching Ahmad Shah Durrani and from many high authorities such as Emperor Alamgir II and Najib-ud-daulah he received invitations to invade India. The Mughlani Begam who had been ousted from her authority in the Panjab by the Delhi Wazir wrote to him: "I am ruined by the treachery of Mir Mumin Khan, Adina Beg Khan and Sayyid Jamil-ud-din Khan. Goods and cash worth crores of rupees lie buried to my knowledge in the palace of my late father-in-law (Wazir Qamar-ud-din Khan), including heaps of gold and silver stored inside the ceiling. Complete disagreement exists among the Emperor Alamgir II, his wazirs and nobles. If you invade India this time, the Indian Empire with all its riches of crores will fall into your hands without any trouble."[2]

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Ahmad Shah Abdali readily embraced the occasion that promised him such evident advantages. Ha sent his envoy, Qalandar Beg Khan, in advance to the court of Delhi demanding satisfaction against the Wazir's conduct in encroaching upon his province of Lahore. This envoy was granted audience on the 31st October and the 23rd November, and he ultimately left Delhi on the 9th December without achieving anything.[3]

Ahmad Shah Abdali left Kandhar early in autumn and arrived at Peshawar in the beginning of November. From here he despatched his advance-guard ahead of him under his son Timur Shah and his commander-in-chief Jahan Khan. The vanguard crossed the Indus at Attock, halted at Hasan Abdal and collected provisions for the main army in the city of Gujrat. These troops marched in pursuit of Adina Beg Khan and plundered the districts of Eminabad, and Batala (13th December). Adina Beg Khan lay encamped at Jalalabad about 80 kms south-east. He fled away with his family, Sadiq Beg and Jamil-ud-din across the Beas to Nur Mahal, abandoning his camp and baggage to be plundered by the Abdali troops. Adina thence retired to Tihara on the eastern side of river

[1]Miskin, 126.
[2]Ali-ud-din, 114b; *Haqiqat*, 30.
[3]*Delhi Chronicle*. 135; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 152.

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Satluj: He took refuge in the waterless tract of Hansi and Hissar. Jahan Khan reached the Jullundur Doab without any opposition and occupied the country upto the Satluj. "From Lahore to Sarhind not a village was left tenanted. All men, high and low, had fled away in all directions."[1]

Adina Beg Khan did not find himself towards Hissar side quite safe from the Durrani danger. After some time he escaped to the Kangra hills and took shelter in a hill called Garli-Bharwain about 50 kms north of Hoshiarpur.[2]

Abdali arrived at Delhi like coming home, January, 1757

In the course of all his previous incursions the Durrani had experienced active opposition from the Panjab Subahdar and some time from the Delhi court in checking his advance. On this occasion, the empire had gone to such rack and ruin that no one tried to impede his march. Not a single soldier came forward to oppose him till he easily found himself in the imperial capital where everybody lay at his mercy. "The Wazir, who wielded the empire without a sharer in his power, took no step to meet the danger. He refused to go to Sarhind to oppose the invasion. He only consulted darvishes how to overcome the enemy through their prayers without fighting.[3] The only measure that he took was to send Mughlani Begam from Delhi to meet the Durrani and pacify his anger. The Delhi diarist recorded on Monday 10th January, 1757: "The Begam, wife of Muin-ul-Mulk, left at midnight to meet the Abdali to mend matters. Prince Ali Gauhar and Prime Minister saw her off at Katra Mahaldar Khan."[4] She started at the head of about 400 horse including Miskin and joined the invader at Karnal. The Durrani pursued his onward march taking the Begam with him.[5]

Agha Ali Raza Khan had been sent on the 20th December as an envoy to Abdali with gifts worth two lakhs of rupees to dissuade

[1]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 161-2, 165, 170. Cf. *Khazana-e-Amira*, 52; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 100b-101a; Khair-ud-din, 42; *Siyar*, III, 53; *Ahwal-e- Adina Beg Khan*, 54b; *Gulistan-e-Rahmat*, 51-2; Khushwat Rae, 90; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 9; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 131-2; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 72a; *Irshad-ul-Mustqim*, 295a; Sarkar, II, 63-4.

[2]Cf. Forster, I, 317.

[3]Sarkar, II, 86.

[4]*Waqa-e-Shah Alam Sani* on p. 136, records this event thus: (10 January, 1757).

[5]Miskin, 131-7. Cf. Khair-ud-din, 42.

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him from coming to Delhi.[1] He returned on the 14th January, 1757 "with the doleful message that the Afghan invader had demanded two crores of rupees in cash, the hand of the Emperor's daughter, and all the territory from Sarhind westwards, as the condition of his going back, and that he had severely censured the Delhi Government for provoking his invasion when they could not fight, but were bent on making terms."[2]

Najib joined the invader at Narela, 26 kms north of Delhi, on 16th January and Imad presented himself in the Abdali camp on the 19th. The Abdali granted him audience on the 20th and severely reprimanded him asking, "how the first officer of the empire of Hindustan could make an abject submission without striking even one blow to save the nation's credit."[3] Afterwards he was taken in the Shah's train as a captive.

Abdali entered Delhi on the 28th January, 1757. From that day his troops commenced plundering and sacking the people both Hindus and Muslims mercilessly. The Durrani entered upon a systematic torture and exaction. The houses of all high nobles were dug up and their women stripped of everything. The Mughlani Begam rendered the Abdali the greatest service by informing him of what worth each noble was and by disclosing the nature of beauty of the virgins of the imperial palace.

Abdali's and Begam's nefarious activities

"Mughlani Begam wife of Muin-ul-Mulk would disclose to Sardar Jahan Khan the condition of everybody and would get their houses ransacked. In particular everything belonging to the house of late Itimad-ud-daulah Qamar-ud-din Khan, her father-in-law, including all cash and jewellery, was confiscated at her instigation. She got Sholahpuri Begam, wife of deceased Qamar-ud-din, her mother-in-law, imprisoned. Under torture all the gold and diamonds were recovered for the Abdali treasury. She would sit before Sardar Jahan Khan and would tell him about the people of the city."[4]

Afterwards Ahmad Shah ordered that from every house in the city rich and poor alike without any exception a regular levy should

[1] *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 161.

[2] Sarkar, II, 88-9.

[3] Ibid, 93. For details of this interview see *Indian Antiquary*, 1907, p. 45; Sarkar, II, 93.

[4] *Husain Shahi*, 37.

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be charged. The whole city was divided into wards and Afghan troops were posted everywhere. Torture of all kinds was applied and a large number of men died under the operation, many having poisoned and drowned themselves. Beating and slaying of men and women remained the order of the day in Delhi for a month (4th February to 5th March). The Abdali king married his son Timur Shah to Zohra Begam, the daughter of Emperor Alamgir II, and sent him back to the Panjab with all the booty thus collected to convey it to Afghanistan. He himself forcibly took into wedlock weeping Hazrat Begam, a 16-year-old daughter of late Muhammad Shah.[1]

On the 20th February, Mughlani Begam presented Ahmad Shah Abdali with costly jewels placed in several trays as her personal offering. The Afghan king was greatly delighted, and at once exclaimed: "Hitherto I had styled you my daughter, but from to-day I shall call you my son and give you the title of Sultan Mirza." He immediately conferred upon her his own tiara (kulah) with its ornaments of gold and jewels (jigha), cloak (pairhan) and aigrette, and other vestments that he was then wearing.[2]

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Finding Durrani so pleased with her, she requested him to restore his favour to Imad-ul-Mulk, and to reinstate him in the office of the Wazir. The Abdali replied, "I can appoint him the chief minister, but I understand that he has not yet married your daughter." The Begam told him that the ceremony was going to be performed that night. Ahmad Shah ordered Shah Vali Khan and Jahan Khan to make preparaions for the occasion, and in the night (20-21 February) married Imad to Umda Begam in his own presence. He gave as gift two lakhs of rupees, two elephants, four horses and bestowed the title of Farzand Khan on Imad. He handed over Ganna Begam, Imad's first wife, to Mughlani Begam to be treated as a bondmaid, while other women in his harem were divorced by Imad at Abdali's bidding. Imad was then installed in the office of the Wazir.[3]

On the 22nd February Ahmad Shah left for Mathura and Agra to carry campaign in the territory of Raja Surajmal Jat, and Mughlani Begam along with Miskin accompanied him. In the course of this campaign, the Abdali grew more kind to her and

[1]Sarkar, II, 101-2.
[2]Miskin, 138.
[3]*Delhi Chronicle*, 110-1; Miskin, 139; *Indian Antiquary*, 1907, pp. 46-9.

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granted her the Jullundur Doab, Jammu, and Kashmir as a fief. She sent her agents to these places, appointed Khwajah Ibrahim Khan to the governorship of Kashmir, confirmed Raja Ranjit Dev in the possession of Jammu, and invited Adina Beg Khan to administer the Jullundur Doab as her deputy.[1]

Begam's appointment in the Panjab cancelled

Mughlani Begam soon came to know that a hoax had been played upon her, and that the whole country west of the Jamuna had been placed under the charge of Abdali's son Timur Shah.

She had deputed Miskin to take a khilat for Adina Beg Khan who lay concealed in the Kangra hills. He arrived at Hajipur (50 kms north of Hoshiarpur); but Adina's camp was still 50 kms farther in a hill called Garli-Bharwain.[2] Miskin presented the robes of honour and stayed with him for some time.[3]

Meanwhile Adina Beg received an order from Timur Shah and a letter from Jahan Khan asking him to come to Lahore immediately and to take up the administration of the Jullundur Doab. Adina Beg Khan was in a predicament. He preferred the Begam's suzerainty to the overlordship of Timur and Jahan Khan. He consulted Miskin who advised him to postpone replying to the Prince till he received a definite communication from the Begam. Miskin was selected to undertake this duty and he started for Kandhar where the Begam was believed to have gone in the invader's train. He left the place, arrived at Adinanagar in three days and the next day by boat crossed the Ravi. At the fort he came across an old acquaintance who informed him that the Begam had returned from Abdali's camp, was at Sialkot a few days before and must have arrived at Lahore by then. Miskin reached Lahore in four days.[4]

There he came to know that the Abdali had cancelled the grant of jagir to the Begam. He had offered her an annual allowance of Rs. 30,000 with residence in Lahore. She refused this and insisted on the jagir already given to her. The Durrani said, "Now that your brother Timur Shah is the Viceroy there what will you do with the provinces?" He asked Shah Vali Khan and Jahan Khan to per-

[1]Miskin, 139-40.
[2]The same name is referred to by Khushwaqt Rae, p. 90.
[3]Miskin, 143.
[4]ibid, 145-6.

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suade her, but she would not agree and accompanied him upto the bank of the Jehlam, imploring him in vain to fulfil his promise. Disappointed she returned to Lahore and lived in Serai Hakim which had only two rooms, the rest being in ruins.[1]

The Begam caned by Jahan Khan

Receiving no answer from Adina Beg Khan, Jahan Khan marched into the Doab and gave over many towns and cities to plunder and pillage.[2] Adina Beg Khan agreed to undertake the administration of the Doab under Timur Shah provided that he was exempted from attending his court in Lahore.[3] Timur Shah agreed to it, and sent him the patent as well as the khilat of Doab for an annual tribute of 36 lakhs of rupees, and exempted him from personal attendance at his court.[4] For surety of Adina Beg's conduct and the punctual payment of the tribute, his agent Dilaram was kept in Lahore in constant attendance at the court.[5]

After a couple of months a dispute arose between Jahan Khan and Adina Beg Khan about the payment of the tribute. It seems that Jahan Khan was bent upon finding an excuse to call Adina Beg to Lahore. Adina Beg had been in office as the Afghan deputy only for two months when Jahan Khan started making demands for the tribute. Adina Beg naturally insisted on paying it after the expiry of the year or at the earliest at the end of the harvest. Jahan Khan sent some bailiffs demanding Adina Beg's immediate presence in Lahore. The latter mistrusted the Afghan General and flatly refused to come. He despatched some agents[6] to secure for him the pardon for not attending in person. Timur Shah announced his pardon, but insisted upon his presence.[7]

Jahan Khan at once imprisoned his agent Dilaram and demanded six lakhs of rupees as the tribute for two months. The Mughlani Begam tried to secure the agent's liberty and ultimately succeeded

[1]Miskin, 147-8.

[2]ibid, 145.

[3]ibid, 165.

[4]ibid, 147.

[5]miskin, 165; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 100; *Siyar*, III, 63; *Tarikh-i-Muzaffari*, 102a; Ahmad Shah, 872; *Irshad-ul-Mustqim*, 295a and 317a.

[6]Shahab Khan of Peguwala (Phagwara?), Chaudhari Sahib Khan of Noshahra, Dharam Das Niranjaniya, Chaudhari of Jodhanagri, and Rae Ibrahim of Kapurthala. *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 55a. Cf. *Irshad-ul-Mustqim*, 317a.

[7]Ali-ud-din, 117a.

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in her object by standing surety for the payment of the revenues. She also wrote to Adina Beg Khan for immediate remittance and on receiving no reply from him sent him some of her own jewels to be pawned to procure money. About this time Dilaram who was daily oppressed by the Afghan General also came to the Begam, saying, "They will kill me; I shall do whatever you advise me." The Begam took pity on him and asked him to flee from Lahore the same night, to get the money from Adina Beg without delay and to return immediately. Jahan Khan was furiously enraged on learning about Dilaram's escape, and sent for the Begam in his own house. Taking up a rod, he caught the Begam and laid on vigorously. (Begam Sahiba ra hamanja did, badast-e-khud chob kashid wa bisyar zad.) She was not spared till she offered him her own jewels worth six lakhs of rupees. Two hundred troopers under two khwajahsaras besieged her house and took away everything they could lay their hands on including Miskin's property and clothes. She was confined in a small room and unspeakable oppression was done to her for two days.[1] (Do roz hamin majra jaur-o-sitam ki baguft dar na ayad mand.)

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The Begam stayed at Batala, May to September, 1758

Jahan Khan marched into the Jullundur Doab, drove away Adina Beg Khan into mountains and seized his territory. Adina Beg was not to be cowed down so easily. He soon won over Marathas and Sikhs, and with their assistance expelled the Afghans from Lahore on 9th April, 1758. On the approach of the Marathas, Jahan Khan transferred his camp to Shahdara on the opposite bank of the Ravi, taking Mughlani Begam and her maiden daughter with him. When the Maratha and Sikh forces reached Lahore, Miskin quietly managed to bring the Begam and her daughter back to Lahore in a covered bullock cart (rath) and admitted them into their residential quarters (haveli).[2]

After the withdrawal of the Afghans, the Marathas appointed Adina Beg Khan, Viceroy of the Panjab for an annual tribute of 75 lakhs of rupees. Adina Beg did not like to stay in Lahore, and preferred to set up his headquarters at Batala 90 kms north of Lahore. He left his son-in-law Khwajah Mirza Khan in charge of the provincial capital. Khawajah Mirza felt afraid of Mughlani

[1]Miskin, 168-71.
[2]ibid, 176.

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Begam's intrigues,[1] and requested Adina Beg Khan to take her with him. Adina Beg Khan accordingly provided the Begam with a few thousand rupees and about 200 bullock carts, and she moved to Batala.[2]

Adina Beg's good treatment of the Begam

At Batala Adina Beg Khan fixed for the Begam a grant of two thousand rupees per mensem and an allowance of fifty rupees per day for the kitchen expenses. She was offered a large mansion worthy of her position for residence. All the jewellery which the Begam had sent to Adina Beg Khan to be pawned in order to pay money to Jahan Khan was returned to her.[3] The Begam left her maiden daughter and the whole male and female establishment in that mansion, and herself (Khud jaridah) lived in Adina Beg's camp. Adina Beg treated all the servants of the Begam with courtesy and consideration. He gave to each of them a horse from his own stable and paid them well and punctually.[4]

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The Begam imprisoned Miskin

Adina Beg's liberal grant of money and other favours brought prosperity to the Begam and her household servants. The Begam paid to Miskin Rs. 400 to get jewels worn in the turban, and a plume which had been seized from him by Jahan Khan's men at Lahore. Miskin bought these ornaments and wore them on the day of festival which fell on 8th June, 1758. But, all of a sudden, Miski nfell a victim, the wrath of the Begam. Miskin was at this time a handsome, tall and robust young man of eighteen, and the Begam was about forty years old. Of loose character as she was, she could not resist temptation. Miskin, on the other hand, as he frequently mentions, considered himself only a loyal servant of the family, and would not yield to the Begam's importunity. He says: "One day unfortunately an unbecoming event, the mention of which is beyond propriety and wisdom, took place. The Begam got terribly angry with me, imprisoned me, and even wanted to kill me. But as I was destined to enjoy the spectacle of this world a little longer, God took care of me and kept me safe. In the meantime the cause

[1]Miskin, 179.
[2]ibid, 180.
[3]ibid, 181.
[4]ibid, 180-1.

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of my sufferings became known to all. Even Adina Beg Khan sent a word to the Begam pointing out the unfairness and unwisdom of the ill-treatment of a loyal and devoted servant. The Begam's wrath was calmed after fifteen days, and she grew kind to me again."[1]

The Begam spent a peaceful and good time at Batala; but her happiness was not going to last very long. Early in September of the same year Adina Beg Khan was taken ill with colic, and after having enjoyed the Maratha viceroyalty of the Panjab for nearly five months, he died there on the 15th September, 1758.[2]

Mughlani Begam settled at Jammu, October, 1758

One of the redeeming features of this period of constant anarchy and chaos was the peace that prevailed in the city of Jammu. It was the capital of Raja Ranjit Dev, a ruler noted for justice and impartiality. In those days the centres of population had shifted from the plains of the Panjab to the submontane region for reasons of safety and security. Ranjit Dev encouraged people of all sorts to settle in Jammu from every part of the Panjab. He granted special concessions and allowances to the courtiers and nobles of Delhi and Lahore, fallen under misfortune. He offered full religious liberty also to the Muslims, and extended to them various favours.[3] George Forster who visited Jammu in 1783 observed:

"Runzeid Deve, the father of the present chief of Jumbo, who deservedly acquired the character of a just and wise ruler, largely contributed to the wealth and importance of Jumbo. Perceiving the benefits which would arise from the residence of Mahometan merchants, he held out to them many encouragements, and observed towards them a disinterested and an honourable conduct. Negative virtues only are expected from an Asiatic despot, and under such a sanction his subjects might deem themselves fortunate; but the chief of Jumbo went farther than the forbearance of injuries; he avowedly protected and indulged his people, particularly the Mahometans, to whom he allotted a certain quarter of the town, which was thence denominated Moghulpour; and that no reserve might appear in his treatment of them, a mosque was erected in the new colony, a liberality of disposition the more conspicuous, and con-

[1]Miskin, 181.

[2]ibid, 182; *S.P.D.*, II, 96; *Farhat-un-Nazirin* in Elliot, VIII, 169; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 101.

[3]Bute Shah, 34b-35b; Ali-ud-din, 51a.

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ferring the greater honour on his memory, as it is the only instance of the like toleration in this part of India, and as the Kashmirians, who chiefly composed his Mahometan subjects, have been, since their conversion, rigorous persecutors of the Hindoos. He was so desirous also of acquiring their confidence and esteem, that when he had been riding through their quarter during the time of prayer, he never failed to stop his horse until the priest had concluded his ritual exclamations."[1]

On the death of Adina Beg Khan the Begam was at a loss what to do, and eventually decided to settle at Jammu. When she reached near the town, Raja Ranjit Dev came out to a distance of 8 kms to receive her. On seeing her he alighted from his horse, paid respects to the Begam, and offered her a suitable dwelling place and some allowance and lands by way of maintenance. The Begam took from Miskin the three jewels of the turban and conferred these along with a robe of honour on the Raja.[1]

Life at Jammu, 1758-1759

Ranjit Dev offered a house to the Mughlani Begam for the time being near the residence of Udho Minister. This place was not suitable to the dignity of the Begam; but no other building better than this was available at that time. The Raja ordered Mukarma Kotwal to build a new house for her, and so the Begam was satisfied. The new place was not much better than the old one, and the Begam did not like it. However she granted a robe of honour to the Kotwal to show her approval with a view to avoid any future difficulty which might be created by him in case of disapproval. The Raja visited the Begam twice a week to pay his respects. After a few days he offered to the Begam an allowance of Rs. 1,000 per mensem. The Begam, in view of her past glory, did not like the idea of living on the dole of the Raja, and declined to accept the offer.

Many courtiers, officials and bankers of Lahore were living in Jammu, all of whom waited on the Begam and each received a doshala and a robe of honour. In this way the Begam distributed nearly 150 doshalas. Besides she was maintaining an establishment of about two hundred persons in her service, all well paid and handsomely rewarded. Furthermore, giving away of gifts very fre-

[1]*Journey*, I, 283-4.
[2]Miskin, 182.

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quently was a part of her nature. She continued this practice in spite of her limited financial resources. The result was that in the course of a year and a half she spent all the ready money in her possession. Then she pawned her jewellery for Rs. 30,000 and this sum also was soon used up. "Nothing was left with the Begam now and she had to face the difficulty of finding money for her daily needs, until starvation stared her in the face."

Miskin had been given Rs. 400 for the three jewels of the turban which the Begam had conferred upon Raja Ranjit Dev. Besides, each male servant was granted a precious pearl. Finding the Begam financially in peril, Miskin collected all the pearls, his own money, including a nose-ring which the Begam had given to Miskin's wife, and presented all these to the Begam. The Begam declined to accept; but Miskin handed them over to the mess-manager to buy articles of diet and other necessary things.[1]

Invited to take the governorship of Kashmir

Just at this time an agent of Sukh Jiwan Mal, the Governor of Kashmir, visited the Begam. The Begam's presence in Jammu had alarmed him greatly. His suspicion was that the Begam intended to oust him from the governorship with the assistance of Ahmad Shah Durrani, of whom he had become independent. Sukh Jiwan made offers of presents and a tribute if the Begam stayed in Jammu and did not proceed to Kashmir. The agent found that the Begam had no intention of approaching to Kashmir, and so wrote to Sukh Jiwan not to send any money and gifts.

Four days afterwards Hasan Manda, a messenger of the courtiers of Kashmir, rivals of Sukh Jiwan, waited upon the Begam, offered a nazar of one gold coin, and requested the Begam to march upon Kashmir and to seize the government of the province from Sukh Jiwan. He also stated that his masters had collected a force of twelve thousand men and had been fighting with Sukh Jiwan for the past two months. But they could not pool their resources for want of a leader. The people were ready to accept her as their ruler, particularly in view of the fact that on an earlier occasion she had been granted the governorship of Kashmir by Ahmad Shah Durrani. Miskin tried his utmost to prevail upon the Begam to accept the overtures of Hasan Manda; but she preferred submission of Sukh Jiwan who had promised her an annual tri-

[1]Miskin, 183-84.

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bute. Hasan Manda returned to Kashmir, and the Begam waited in vain for Sukh Jiwan's presents.

In the meantime Hasan Manda regularly sent petitions to the Begam and ultimately requested her that if she was not willing to undertake the expedition personally, she should despatch an agent with the Durrani's certificate of the governorship of Kashmir. He stated that the agent should be accompanied by five hundred horse, and he promised to gain the province for her. This time the Begam decided to try her chance. She offered the post of her plenipotentiary in Kashmir to Ghazi Beg Khan alias Aqil Beg Khan, her former paramour, who had served as her paymaster (Bakhshi) in Lahore. He declined to accept the office. She then selected Abu Tarab Khan Kashmiri, but his appointment was not approved of by Hasan Manda who explained that the fact of his being a Kashmiri was a disqualification as he would not command full respect and co-operation from all the chiefs. The position was thereupon offered to Miskin whose selection was liked by Hasan Manda. Miskin's comrades suspected treachery on the part of the Begam; but Miskin satisfied them on this score. The next problem was to secure the service of 500 men. There was no money or jewels available. Miskin therefore sold some rugs and carpets and procured Rs. 2,000. He set up his camp outside the city for recruitment, and there he was joined by Hasan Manda.[1]

The Begam is duped by a priest

In this camp Miskin recruited nearly 400 troopers in a day and remained busy from early morning till midnight in recording the descriptive rolls of all these men. When all had retired to rest except Miskin and Darab Beg, the Begam, disguised as a man with a turban and a cloak on, appeared in his camp. Miskin rose and saluted her and enquired what had brought her there at dead of night in that strange appearance. She said that a Mulla (a Muslim preacher) had promised to procure her a buried treasure of Rs. 30,000. She gave him out of the sum of Rs. 2,000 which Miskin had secured from the sale of rugs and carpets, Rs. 500 for scents etc., another Rs. 500 for a piebald horse to be sacrified on the place of the treasure, and the remaining Rs. 1,000 as an advance from the promised reward to him. This hour of the night was selected by the Mulla for the sacrifice of the horse, and she came there to take Miskin

[1]Miskin, 184-87.

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with her to that place. She told him that spade-workers and torch-bearers were waiting outside. On hearing this Miskin heaved a deep sigh of grief and realized that all of his plans of going to Kashmir had been shattered to pieces. He sent Faizullah Beg to find out if the Mulla had sacrificed the horse in that ruined place. Faizullah Beg stated that he found no living creature in that house. He was again sent with Darab Beg, but they returned disappointed. A messenger was despatched to the Mullah's house. The neighbours informed him that the Mulla had rented the house for ten days, and that the same evening he had left along with other members of his family. The Begam was very much grieved. She returned to her residence, and abused, maltreated and beat all those men and maid-servants who had approved of that scheme.

The Begam ordered Miskin to procure another two thousand rupees and undertake the expedition. Miskin respectfully expressed his inability. The Begam flew into a rage and openly abused Miskin. On seeing this the recruits and soldiers fled away; but Miskin alone with four horses of his own stayed in the camp waiting for further orders of the Begam. Meanwhile one horse was stolen by thieves and two were forcibly taken possession of by his friends. Thus only one horse was left with Miskin. Several of his servants also ran away. Only two stood by him. He stayed in this camp for forty days, but the Begam did not restore her favour to him. His comrades-in-arms were forcing Miskin to lead them to the Begam to demand their arrears of pay, after which they wanted to seek service somewhere else. Miskin did not agree.[1]

The Begam and Miskin had a narrow escape

Miskin's companions bitterly complained to him of their hardship which they were facing for non-payment of their salaries. Out of them two, Afrasiyab Beg and Bahroz Beg, threatened to kill the Begam. Miskin dissuaded them as best as he could; but they persisted in their resolution. When they left Miskin, he sent Darab Beg after them to prevent them from executing their design.

Afrasiyab Beg and Bahroz Beg made straight for the Begam's house. They seized her, threw her on the ground and drew out their swords to kill her. The Begam finding herself in the jaws of death used her wits. She suppressed her anger and displeasure and said that they were justified in maltreating her. She told them that she

[1]Miskin, 187-90.

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had still plenty of jewellery, and she was ready to pay them immediately. They let her go. She instantly repaired to the top of the house and cried aloud for assistance against the murderers. The people at once entered her house and arrested both the culprits including other servants. The Begam blamed Miskin also and immediately sent for him. On seeing Miskin she loudly abused him. Mukarma, the Kotwal of the city, also arrived. He assured the Begam that he would serve them right. Saying this he caught Miskin by the arm and took him out in the street. There he summoned all the Turki servants in the service of the Begam. He told them that the Begam was a bad woman, and they must not worry. He returned to the Begam and stated to her that all of her servants were bent upon mischief, but he would set them right in a day or two. The Kotwal afterwards went home and from there sent a man to Miskin asking for a necklace of pearls as the price of his settling the dispute. Miskin assured the man that he was penniless. The following day Miskin and Afrasiyab Beg were summoned to the Kotwal's house, where both of them were bound hand and foot and hung down by ropes into a well to the surface of water. Afterwards Muqim Beg and Husain Beg were also imprisoned similarly in the same well. Miskin's hands were tightly secured on the back. In that condition the Kotwal repeated his demand for a necklace, otherwise threatened to drown them. The Begam sent men in their search, and on tracing them in the well they reported it to her. She at once ordered for their release. Afrasiyab and Bahroz Beg were dismissed from service, while others were set free.[1]

Miskin escorted Begam's daughter to Delhi, September, 1759

Miskin knew that the Begam had ruined her life, and as a faithful servant of the family he keenly felt for the Begam's younger daughter whose career was at stake owing to her mother's bad company. About that time Khwajah Said Khan, an ex-official of Lahore, came to Jammu. Miskin waited upon him, and in view of the Begam's pecuniary embarrassments induced him to help the Begam in as much as to convey her maiden daughter to Delhi to her elder sister, suggesting that by doing so, Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Khan, the Begam's son-in-law, would be pleased with him. He took the Khwajah to the Begam, and prevailed upon her to send her daughter to Delhi. About three hundred rupees were required for the

[1]Miskin, 190-93.

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hire of carriages and carts, etc. and this sum was provided by Said Khan. The Begam appointed Miskin to this task, and made preparations for the departure of her daughter.[1] Miskin hired fifteen carriages, and with many maid-servants escorted the young lady to Delhi. It took them one month on the way.[2]

Miskin narrates an interesting incident. One of Begam's maid-servants who was in love with Mahabbat eunuch, an ex-servant of the Begam and then living in Delhi, disappeared from the Begam's house. The Begam suspected her servants, and beat them so severely, that one maid-servant died under the operation. The Begam blamed Miskin also. This woman was recovered later from Jammu.[3]

The Begam received the grant of Sialkot District, c. April, 1760

Miskin was still in Delhi, when the news of Ahmad Shah Abdali's fresh invasion reached there. Shortly afterwards the Begam also reached the capital. Miskin waited upon her. She secured an elephant to ride on, several tents and carpets, and loading all these goods on camels she joined the camp of the Durrani King on the banks of Lake Nawab Qamar-ud-din Khan. Ahmad Shah on learning that she was reduced to poverty granted her the revenues of Sialkot parganah amounting to Rs. 30,000 per annum. The Begam returned to Delhi, and appointed Abu Tarab Khan her agent at Sialkot. The district of Sialkot formed a part of Chahar Mahal ruled over by Rustam Khan who refused to hand over the Sialkot district to Abu Tarab.

The Begam thereupon appointed Miskin to the charge of Sialkot district, and gave him a certificate under her seal and signatures. Miskin experienced no difficulty in taking charge of the district. As it was the harvest time, Miskin set himself to the task of collecting half-yearly revenues and soon managed to realize Rs. 15,000, which he transmitted to the Begam.[4]

The Sikhs captured Miskin, c. October, 1760

By this time Ahmad Shah Durrani had called to his assistance most of his officers and troops from the Panjab, and Sikhs became supreme everywhere. The next instalment of revenue was to be

[1]Miskin, 195-96.
[2]ibid, 194-96.
[3]ibid, 195-96.
[4]ibid, 208-18.

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collected in October at the end of the summer crops, but the Sikh and Hindu cultivators were averse to its payment. They rose against the Muslim officers and captured and later ransomed Rustam Khan, the Governor of Chahar Mahal, and Miskin, the district officer of Sialkot.

The incident is so interesting that it will not be out of place to give translation of a part of Miskin's narrative in order to present a real view of the lawlessness that prevailed in the Panjab at that time, particularly when the Durrani Emperor was near Delhi:

"Meanwhile the Governor of Chahar Mahal with 150 horse and foot came out of the city (Sialkot) to fight the Sikhs. On hearing this, in a short while, I also galloped off and joined him at a distance of 6 kms. I enquired where he was going. He replied that there was a village 18 kms off as the crow flies where 50 Sikhs were fighting (with the villagers). The zamindars had informed him and so he was bound for that place in order to punish them. I accompanied him. When we covered 18 kms (we saw that) the village was invested by nearly 4,000 Sikhs. On seeing us from a distance they left the village and rushed towards us. There was a fort in ruins nearby. All of us took shelter in it. The fight commenced. They committed violence on the village from afternoon till midnight

"We spent the night with the greatest anxiety and irresolution. When the day dawned I saw that Sikhs and zamindars were running in crowds to fight us, and our men were driven back every moment. They very loudly shouted, 'Hand over Rustam Khan, Governor of Chahar Mahal to us. We showered bullets on them for about an hour and a half and afterwards our supply of ammunition ran short. The Sikhs grew bolder and came just below the fort. In this state of helplessness we threw on them from the top of the fort clods of earth, pieces of stone, broken earthen vessels, and pieces of wood, in short, on whatever we could lay our hands. We kept them back with bravery and courage till noon, and did not allow them to approach us. At last the Sikhs climbed up the tower and began to break the walls.

"At this Rustam Khan, I and six other men, tied pieces of cloth round our waists and brandishing swords came out of the door. By chance my foot slipped near the gate, and I fell down. The Sikhs at once captured me on the spot, and a few paces ahead Rustam Khan was also arrested. One of our companions named Alahvardi Beg was slain. By that time the number of Sikhs and zamindars had

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swelled to 20,000. They brought us to the village where they were originally fighting. At nightfall they demanded one lakh of rupees from me (by way of ransom). The discussion was prolonged till midnight, and ultimatcly the bargain was truck at Rs. 6,000. It was settled that I should go to my village the next day, give them an order on (some banker of) Jammu, and on receiving the money they would leave me safely in Jammu.

"Consequently, early next morning two or three Sikhs started for my place. About 100 other Sikhs were also going in that direction. They took me on horseback for ten kms. and afterwards they forced me to walk. When I had gone about 20 kms. my feet began to ache, and I felt exhausted. Then I caught sight of Pasrur city from a distance of nearly ten kms. At that time the Sikh on my horse invoked the name of his Guru and said, 'O Guru! whosoever utters your name in the morning, is never disappointed in any undertaking.' On hearing this prayer I fell aweeping. I also remembered God and said, 'O most high protector! I am your humble creature. Help me now and liberate me from the hands of the Sikhs.' I was uttering this prayer when my gaze lighted on a towering fort on the way. The zamindar of that place fell upon the Sikhs with 40 or 50 armed soldiers (barqandaz), defeated them, and carried off all their plundered goods and baggage. He also brought us in his fort. At the time of the evening prayer that Sikh who was driving us sent the zamindar of the fort a word that the Mughal whom he had seized was to be ransomed by the chief of the Sikhs for Rs. 6,000 and that he was responsible for that sum. On hearing this we were placed in a tower under strict vigilance."[1]

Miskin remained in captivity for ten days and suffered much from poverty and violence. But the zamindar of the fort took him for an ordinary Mughal soldier, and finally liberated him on receiving only Rs. 200 from him. Rustam Khan was subjected to greater misery, and was ultimately released on the extortion of Rs. 22,000.[2]

The Begam returned to Jammu, c. November, 1760

When Ahmad Shah Abdali encamped at Panipat on 1st November 1760, to have the final struggle with the Marathas, Mughlani Begam returned to Jammu. Miskin was at this time in captivity of the Sikhs. Two days after his release he visited the Begam at

[1]Miskin, 218-21.
[2]Ibid, 222-24.

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Jammu. Miskin presented her with Rs. 500 which he had saved at Sialkot. The Begam thanked him for the money and informed him that she needed money badly as Rs. 15,000 sent by him had already been spent. Miskin explained the hardship he had suffered at Sialkot. The Begam expressed her gratification for his faithful services.

Abu Tarab Khan, the original nominee of the Begam, grew jealous of Miskin's achievements, and taking advantage of the Begam's unsteady temperament set his mother, sister and wife after the Begam to get Abu Tarab appointed in Miskin's place. The Begam ultimately agreed to their entreaties. Abu Tarab nominated Darab Beg as his assistant and sent him to Sialkot, while Miskin was detained in Jammu.

No zamindar came to offer submission to Darab Beg. He then took the Begam to Sialkot. She stayed there for a fortnight; but none waited upon her to pay homage. Rustam Khan advised the Begam to reinstate Miskin. In disappointment the Begam returned to Jammu. Raja Ranjit Dev and his Minister also recommended Miskin for the restoration of her favour. The Begam was very much offended at his popularity, and she put him under surveillance.

Miskin remained in the Begam's captivity for nearly six months (November, 1760-March, 1761) and was released at the time of Ahmad Shahu Durrani's return to Lahore through the intercession of Fatah Ali Khan Qizalbash, warden of Shah Vali Khan's Diwan Khana. In his absence the Begam could realize only Rs. 3,000 from Sialkot District, and this money was paid by the zamindars only for fear of the Durrani King who was then in Lahore. The Begam was dissatisfied with this small sum and she knew that Miskin was the proper man for the job; but her vanity would not permit her to admit her failure.[1]

Mughlani Begam married a eunuch, c. June, 1761

Shortly after the retirement of Ahmad Shah Abdali Abu Tarab died. The Begam was deeply grieved and blamed Miskin for having killed him by magic. During Miskin's captivity Abu Tarab was the head of her household establishment and another eunuch named Shahbaz was his assistant. On the death of Abu Tarab the chief position which was generally occupied by Miskin was given to Shahbaz. The Begam's intimacy with Shahbaz became known

[1] Miskin, 223-28.

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to the people. Miskin found everybody wagging his tongue telling tales of the Begam's loose life with him, and "in the whole city of Jammu the notoriety of this affair was talked of for about two or three months."[1] The scandal flared up sky-high, and the Begam found it impossible to continue to live at this place. Consequently she retired to another hill called Samba (50 kms. south-east of Jammu), which was not under the direct jurisdiction of Ranjit Dev. She left Miskin behind to wind up her business at Jammu. Miskin stayed there for seventeen days, and then joined the Begam. He found that his family and all other women who had always lived with the Begam had been left at a place called Parmandal (30 kms. from Jammu), while the Begam was living all alone with Shahbaz. Miskin presented himself before the Begam who informed him that she had married Shahbaz.[2] She asked Miskin to congratulate Shahbaz on his marriage and offer him a nazar of five rupees. In return the Begam promised to give him a precious sword and a necklace of pearls and to reinstate him in the charge of Sialkot district.

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Miskin was sorely disappointed. He expressed his entire disapprobation and reminded the Begam of her noble ancestry, mentioning the names of her father, maternal uncle, great maternal uncle, husband, father-in-law and Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah The Begam got angry with him, and severely rebuked him.[3]

The Begam planned to slay Miskin

The Begam considered Miskin a great obstacle in the way of her conjugal happiness. She asked him to retire to Parmandal. Miskin reached the place in the evening and the Begam with her husband arrived there at night with a view to murder him. Miskin's house was immediately surrounded and fifty men were appointed to keep watch over him. Parmandal belonged to a mendicant who lived in a temple at some distance. Miskin sent a message to him informing him of the whole affair and requested him to release him from the Begam's captivity. The Mahant immediately marched to Parmandal at the head of his men and set him free. Miskin took his wife, child and Darab Beg with him and instantly retired to Jammu, from where he proceeded to Sarhind and took service under Zain

[1]Miskin, 230.
[2]ibid, 231.
[3]ibid, 231-32.

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Khan.[1]

The Begam died, 1779

About the last eighteen years of the Begam's life nothing is known as Miskin had retired from her service, and had gone first to Sarhind and then to Delhi. Miskin met her once more in 1779. By this time Miskin had greatly flourished in life and had become a peer of the Mughal Empire. The Begam's social and financial position on the other hand had rapidly deteriorated. The Begam visited Delhi in 1779, when Miskin found her in distress and destitute of all comforts of life. He did whatever he possibly could for her and tried to make her stay comfortable. The Begam stayed in the imperial capital for two months, and then returned to Jammu, where shortly afterwards she died.[2]

This was the tragic end of the great woman born in the purple and gifted with many talents. To her social advantage and natural ability was added the backing of the name of her mighty patron, Ahmad Shah Durrani and this considerably strengthened her position.

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Mughlani Begam has no title to greatness if we are to judge her by her achievements. She never led troops in the battle-field. She was a poor administrator, and could not choose ablest heads for various departments of the state. In the choice of officers she was often led by eunuchs and maid-servants in her service. The result was that during two years of her regime the revenue administration went to pieces, and the resources of the state neither improved nor were preserved.

As a diplomat, she was successful. Her strength in this art lay in the application of all the instruments of diplomacy, flattery and threats, lying and frankness, reward and rod and sometimes by playing a bluff.

The most redeeming feature in her character was her generosity to all, high and low, rich and poor alike; and in this respect she stands head and shoulders above most of her sex. But this was often misjudged and ill-bestowed; and it brought her destruction and disaster instead of fame and fortune.

Eunuchs proved her ruin. They put her into bad ways. She was given to extremeties and knew no moderation. When once she star-

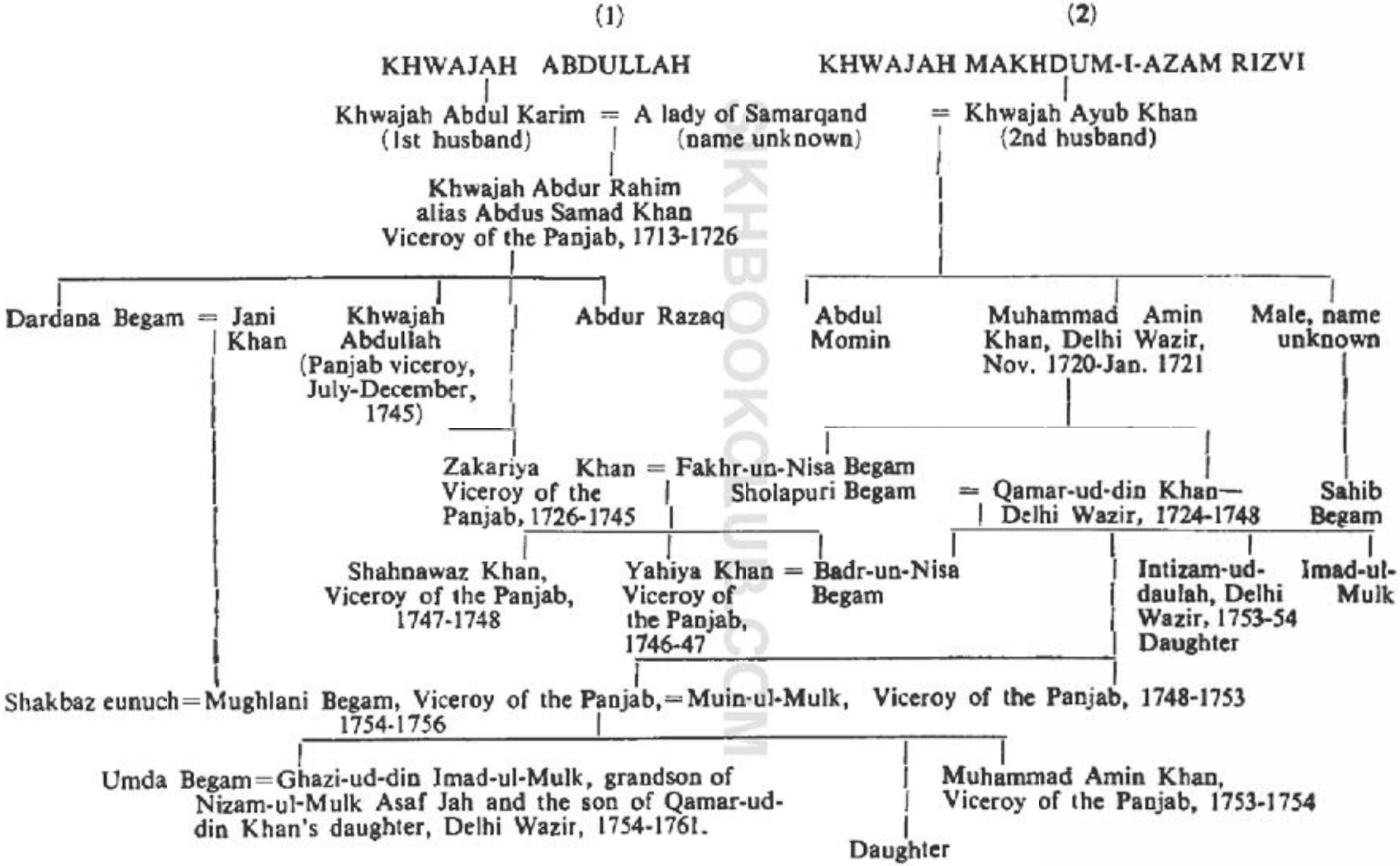
[1]Miskin, 232-33.
[2]ibid, 350.

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ted going downhill, nothing could arrest her degradation. Her own courtiers and relatives are also to share the responsibility for her fall. They would not separate private life from public life in the case of a woman, though regarding themselves they sedulously maintained this distinction.

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THE GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF MUGHLANI BEGAM



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CHAPTER 18

Adina Beg Khan—The last Mughal Viceroy of the Panjab (Date of birth unknown—died on Sept. 15, 1758)

Political background

In diplomacy and intrigue, in winning friends and in promoting his own rise from an unlettered domestic servant to the viceroyalty of the Panjab, Adina Beg Khan stands unrivalled in the history of this province.

In the eighteenth century the great empire of the Mughals after a glorious career of nearly two centuries had fallen into a gradual process of decay. The Mughal Emperors were losing their power and prestige with headlong precipitation, while their unworthy ministers and supporters unscrupulously indulged in murder, emperor-blinding, treachery and rapine, and were always ready to sacrifice the interests of the empire for their own selfish ends.

The Mughal viceroys of provinces were generally sunk in sloth and sensuality. They had no fear of interference by the Central Government and were free from restraint. Hence there was no check on the progress of misrule. This confusion was further aggravated by a series of foreign invasions from the north-west, leaving nothing in their wake but the smoke of burning homes, ravished humanity and the reek of innocent blood.

Such a chaotic state offered great prizes to the able and ambitious persons. Men rose from obscurity into full blaze of historical renown. Adina Beg Khan was one of such men. Though he belonged to low birth and was unlettered, yet he was endowed with a masterful ambition and presevering temper. He worked out opportunities with resolution and steadiness. He planned with deliberation and foresight the fabric of his future fortune. He carried his designs into execution with indefatigable application. He was first employed even before his teens as a servant in the households of Mughal officers, and rose to power by patient labour and force of

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character, until he ultimately became Viceroy of the Panjab and played an important part in the closing scenes of Muslim rule in the province.

Adina Beg Khan started his public life in early twenties of the eighteenth century. It was brought to a close in 1758. During that time he served under six governors—Zakariya Khan, Abdullah Khan, Yahiya Khan, Shahnawaz Khan, Muin-ul-Mulk and Mughlani Begam. He saw Nadir Shah's invasion, four campaigns of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Maratha conquest of the Panjab and the rise of the Sikhs to political power. The Panjab had become in that period a cockpit of struggle between various powers and had almost been converted into no man's land. The first struggle lay between Ahmad Shah Abdali and the Mughals, in which the former was victorious. Then ensued the conflict between Ahmad Shah and the Marathas in which the latter were worsted. Afterwards the Sikhs and Ahmad Shah began to fight between themselves for the possession of the plains of the Panjab and ultimately Ahmad Shah was expelled from the province. Adina Beg therefore witnessed four *gardis* or periods of hurly-burly or wild struggle for the possession of the Panjab by Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah, the Marathas and the Sikhs, known as the Nadir Gardi, the Shah Gardi, the Maratha Gardi and the Sikh Gardi. Adina Beg Khan took advantage of each Gardi and greatly added to his power. He also maintained a sort of balance among all these powers.

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No work on this subject is known to exist, except a defective anonymous Persian manuscript of 12 small folios, *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan.* Its dates and even some events are generally wrongly stated, but it supplies some useful material about the important stages in the life of this man. The writer has supplemented this with material gleaned from a number of Persian works, mostly unpublished, and Marathi, Gurmukhi, Urdu and English records, all of which are cited in the footnotes.

Early life

Adina Beg Khan was an Arain by caste who generally followed the profession of vegetable growers. His father's name was Chunnu. He was born at Sharaqpur, 30 kms. below Lahore on the right bank of the Ravi probably at the opening of eighteenth century. Extreme poverty compelled him very early in life to seek service in the homes of Mughal officers. He spent most of his time at

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Jalalabad, Khanpur and Bajwara, all situated in the Jullundur Doab,[1] near Hoshiarpur. This was the beginning of his lifelong association with this part of the Panjab.

His sturdiness of character and love of enterprise made him discontented with his menial position. When he grew to manhood he sought a life of strenuous action. Constant association with the Mughal officers created in his mind a strong desire for military life and he joined the army. He was soon disillusionized of his new career by its poor prospects. He left it for the more lucrative post of revenue collector of village Kang in Sultanpur[2] District of the Jullundur Doab. He displayed great energy, courage and force of character in the performance of his new duties. His ability and tact won him many friends, one of whom was Lala Sri Niwas of Dhir caste, a rich banker of Sultanpur, a very influential man, who in a few years obtained for Adina Beg Khan the revenue contract of five or six villages in the territory of Kang. The following year all the villages of Kang circle passed to his charge.[3]

Adina Beg Khan was now becoming a man of mark. His foot was on the ladder of promotion. His appointment to this post stimulated his energies and rekindled his ambition. The circle of Kang was a unit of the Sultanpur District. Adina Beg Khan deposited his revenues in the treasury at Sultanpur Lodhi. The district officer was so much struck by his honesty, loyalty and ability that he sometimes deputed him to Lahore in charge of the revenues of his district. It was an excellent opportunity for an ambitious person to obtain influence in the court of Lahore.[4]

Under Zakariya Khan, to June 1745

The district officer of Sultanpur died. Adina Beg Khan at once went to Lahore and through the treasury officer sought an interview with the Viceroy, Khan Bahadur Zakariya Khan. The latter demanded security for his good behaviour, which was immediately provided by Lala Sri Niwas of Sultanpur, and Adina Beg was appointed to the post of the district officer of Sultanpur. He showed his gratitude by appointing Lala Sri Niwas his immediate assistant,

[1] *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 50b.

[2] ibid. There are two villages of the same name, viz., Kang Kalan, and Kang Khurd, situated 13 kms. south of Sultanpur, and about 3 kms. north of the Satluj.

[3] ibid, 50b; *Imad-us-Saadat*, 107a-b.

[4] *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 51a.

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while his elder brother Bhawani Das, who knew Persian, was given the post of superintendent of his office.[1]

Shortly afterwards Nadir Shah invaded India. At this time the country was thrown into great confusion, of which full advantage was taken by lawless people and particularly by the Sikhs. Knowing the country intimately, and being endowed with an astuteness and intrepidity which were equal to any emergency, the Sikhs made the best use of these disturbances.

Adina Beg Khan with the help of Sri Niwas and Bhawani Das maintained good order in his district. When the Sikhs approached his territory, the two Hindu brothers waited upon them. They appealed to them in the name of Guru Nanak who had lived there for many years and where he had obtained divine light and wisdom. This appeal had immediate effect, and the Sikhs never touched this land afterwards.

As governor of the Jullundur Doab, c. 1739

On the retirement of the Irani invader the Sikhs continued their depredations and were the principal source of danger to the peace and prosperity of the province. The Viceroy therefore organised columns of light cavalry in the pursuit of the Sikhs, who were consequently expelled from the Bari Doab with heavy losses. They moved on to the Jullundur Doab. Zakariya Khan knew that the Jullundur Doab was mostly peopled by Jats who had sympathy with the Sikhs. Thinking that a local man would be the best choice, Zakariya Khan was in search of a capable governor for this territory. It was brought to his notice that the district of Sultanpur, which was situated on the main road from Lahore to Delhi, had been ruined like many other places[2] by Nadir Shah's troops. He had also taken captive a number of men and women of the place. Even then Adina Beg Khan had succeeded in restoring order in that region, had given relief to the people and had secured the release of many prisoners by ransom. The Viceroy also knew that Adina Beg was active, energetic and had personal knowledge of the Doab. So he was promoted to high rank of the *Nazim*[3] (Governor) of the

[1]ibid.

[2]Anand Ram, 21.

[3]*Nazim* was the governor of a province. He was a military man who commanded the troops and administered the country. The *Diwan*, who was the superintendent of finances, was quite independent of him and was a check on him. But

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Jullundur Doab and was ordered to punish the Sikhs.

His double-faced policy

Adina Beg succeeded in restoring peace and order in the Doab, but he did not adopt severe measures to crush the Sikhs and perhaps deliberately winked at some of their activities, permitting them to carry on so long as they refrained from creating serious disturbances within his jurisdiction. The reason seems to be that he wished to secure his position by keeping the Sikh menace alive, otherwise he feared that in case of perfect peace in the Doab this territory might be leased to somebody else for a larger sum of revenue. Diwan Bakhtmal testifies to this fact when he writes:

"Adina Beg was a greedy man. He did not crush the Sikhs. If he had intended to do so, it was not a difficult task. But he had this idea in mind, that if he quelled the Sikhs, some other tax-farmer might be entrusted with the government of the Doab for a higher sum and he might be dismissed. He therefore treated the Sikhs well and settled terms with them. For this reason the Sikhs grew stronger and they gradually occupied many villages as Jagirs."[1]

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James Browne, writing in 1787 in his *India Tracts*, II, 14, says: "The force he had with him was fully equal to the execution of that service, but Adina Beg considering that if he should entirely put an end to all disturbances in that district, there would remain no necessity for continuing him in so extensive a command, carried on intrigues with the chiefs of the Sicks, and secretly encouraged them to continue their depredations, at the same time pretending to be very desirous of subduing them. From this management the Sicks became daily more powerful and seized upon several places in distant parts of the Subah of Lahore. They also began to perform public pilgrimages to the Holy Tank at Amrutsur without molestation."[2]

The Khan Bahadur would not rest content until he saw the Sikhs out of his province. He issued strict orders to Adina Beg Khan to drive them away. Though unwilling to do so, the Jullundur Faujdar could not postpone this task for long. Consequently he asked the Sikhs to vacate his territory. On receiving these orders they

when both these offices were combined in one person, he was called Subahdar or Viceroy. (cf. *Seir*, 1, 274)

[1] *Khalsa Namah*, 58-9.

[2] *The Jullundur District Gazetteer*, 1904, page 29, supports this view.

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deputed Jassa Singh Thoka (afterwards known as Ramgarhia) as their Vakil to settle terms with Adina Beg Khan. The latter proved too clever for the Sikh Vakil and succeeded in persuading him to accept office under his government. The Sikhs, dismayed at the conduct of their envoy, found safety only in crossing the Satluj and entering the Sarhind Division of Delhi Province, where they created a serious situation for the Imperial Government.[1]

Nadir Shah had denuded the treasury of Lahore and had laid heavy impositions on the government officials and the people. The result was that the Khan Bahadur had nothing to pay to his troops, who were constantly clamouring for their dues. The Viceroy ordered his Diwan, Lakhpat Rae, to make payment to the soldiers and, on his failure to do so, imprisoned him. The Diwan's brother, Jaspat Rae, secured orders from Zakariya Khan to check the accounts of government officials and to call for arrears. This measure brought sufficient money to meet the demands of the troops. The Diwan was set free, but the work of account checking continued unabated.[2]

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Imprisoned, but escaped

In course of time came the turn of Adina Beg Khan, who had also failed in paying his revenues to the Lahore Government. It seems likely that he could not realise revenue from the people on account of their having suffered during Nadir Shah's invasion. He might also have pursued the usual policy of keeping the people pleased with the new Government under him. Adina Beg knew that the wrath of the Diwan was bound to fall upon him, so he immediately went to Lahore and visited Lakhpat Rae alone at night to apologise. The Diwan did not listen to his entreaties and Adina Beg and his two assistants, Bhawani Das and Nidhan Singh, were imprisoned and Shahnawaz Khan, the younger son of Khan Bahadur, was given charge of the Jullundur Doab. The delinquents remained in prison for a year. Then Bhawani Das was released on the security of his brother, Sri Niwas. Adina Beg one night escaped and retired to the hills to avoid capture.

Bhawani Das boiled alive

Bhawani Das was rearrested and ordered to render account of the

[1] *Chahar Gulzar-e-Shujai*, 373; *Ali-ud-din*. 106a; *Raj Khalsa*, 10; *Itihas-e-Ramgarhian*, 410-1; Sarkar, I, 422-3.

[2] *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 51b-52a.

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income and expenditure. He respectfully replied that he would disclose the accounts only in the presence of his master, Adina Beg Khan. He was at once put into a large cauldron and was half boiled, but even then he did not yield.[1] Lakhpat Rae was deeply impressed with the loyalty of Bhawani Das. He took him out of the boiling pot, ordered his physicians to treat him and asked him to beg for a favour. Bhawani Das requested the reinstatement of Adina Beg Khan, which was granted. After a warning Adina Beg Khan was awarded a robe of honour (*khil'at*)[2] and was appointed deputy governor under Shahnawaz Khan.[3]

This incident taught Adina Beg Khan a terrible lesson—not to fail in remitting the government revenues regularly and punctually, and he was never found wanting in this respect during the rest of his life. Besides, he became so tactful that he could successfully commit acts of disloyalty towards his chief without giving him the least suspicion thus retaining his confidence even long afterwards. This he cleverly, managed by playing on one or the other of his master's weaknesses. He kept the young Governor so pleased by his administrative ability and good behaviour that Shahnawaz Khan never interfered with him and Adina Beg Khan gained complete control over the government.

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Under Abdullah Khan, July-December, 1745

Zakariya Khan died on 1st July 1745. His younger brother Abdullah Khan seized the government of the Panjab. He knew that the post was meant for Zakariya Khan's son Yahiya Khan who was also son-in-law of Prime Minister Qamar-ud-din Khan. So, knowing fully well that the Delhi Wazir would not confirm him in that post, he tried his level best to squeeze money both from the rich and the poor. As a result the following couplet became popular

[1] *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 52.

[2] A *khil'at* was composed of a turban, a girdle and a piece of cloth for a gown. It was meant to dress the whole body from head to foot and was properly called. *saropa*. For persons of importance a double piece for a gown and a short gown with short sleeves was added. It was then called a *saropa* of five or six pieces. One piece of light brocade was also added for long drawers. All these pieces were of muslin, embroidered in gold, silver and silk upon the most elegant pattern (*Cf. Seir*, 15).

[3] *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 53a; *Imad-us-Saadat*, 107b. Bute Shah on folio 242b states that it was Adina Beg Khan who was boiled in a kettle-drum by Zakariya Khan.

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at Lahore: Hakumat Nawab Abdullah, Na Chakki rahi na chulha (In the reign of Nawab Abdullah neither grinding stone nor hearth was left). Abdullah ruled for six months till the end of the year. Adina Beg remained undisturbed during this period. He might be sending him presents now and then.

Under Yahiya Khan, January, 1746—March, 1747

Zakariya Khan left behind him three sons, Yahiya Khan, Shahnawaz Khan and Mir Baqi. Zakariya Khan's wife was the sister of Nawab Qamar-ud-din Khan, the grand Wazir of Delhi, and all these three brothers were the sons from the same mother. Yahiya Khan the eldest brother was married to the daughter of Qamar-ud-din Khan and thus the Delhi Wazir was his maternal uncle as well as his father-in-law.

The Wazir was anxious that Yahiya Khan should succeed his father; but the Emperor, Muhammad Shah, was against this proposal, as he did not want to make the Panjab a stronghold of the Turani party. The Wazir was determined to keep the Panjab for his family and he secretly sent Yahiya Khan, who was at that time in Delhi, to take charge of his father's government. Shahnawaz also arrived at Lahore soon after and demanded a division of the patrimony. This settlement was delayed and the troops of both the brothers came to blows. In the end peace was patched up. Shahnawaz Khan was paid a certain amount of cash and jewels, whereupon he withdrew to his faujdari in the Jullundur Doab. The Wazir then begged the viceroyalty of the Panjab f r himself. After long hesitation and persuasion the Emperor agreed and appointed Yahiya Khan Deputy Viceroy on 3rd January, 1746.[1]

Adina Beg Khan now found himself placed politically under Yahiya Khan. Yahiya Khan had no control over Shahnawaz Khan and, in order to maintain his sway over the Jullundur Doab, which was the most fertile part of the Panjab, he treated Adina Beg Khan with great consideration. Adina Beg Khan played his part so cautiously and consummately that he won the trust of Yahiya Khan, retaining at the same time the confidence of Shahnawaz Khan, though the brothers were openly hostile to each other. He gave positive proof of his loyalty to the Lahore Viceroy by persecuting the Sikhs, when the latter's minister, Diwan Lakhpat Rae, carried

[1]Anand Ram, 289; Sarkar, I, 193.

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on a hard campaign against them from April to June, 1746.[1]

Adina Beg fights on the side of Shahnawaz Khan

After some time Shahnawaz Khan rose in insurrection against his brother. He came to Lahore on the 21st November, 1746, encamped near Shalimar Garden and, through Diwan Surat Singh called upon Yahiya Khan to make a complete division of his father's property. Adina Beg Khan, Kauramal and Hashmatullah ranged themselves on the side of Shahnawaz Khan. Yahiya Khan was unwilling to pay him anything, while at the same time he avoided fighting. The discussion was prolonged and no decision was arrived at. The soldiers of both the brothers often came to blows. At last Yahiya Khan, with all his old and new chiefs, such as, Mumin Khan, Lakhpat Rae, Mir N'emat Khan, and Mir Amin Beg, came out of Lahore and a sharp engagement took place. Yahiya Khan then ended the dispute by paying Shahnawaz Khan. Rs. 600,000 from his father's treasure.

Shahnawaz Khan thereupon retired towards Batala, where he seized many places belonging to Yahiya Khan and brought a number of neighbouring chiefs under his jurisdiction. This annoyed the Lahore Viceroy, who prepared for another fight. Shahnawaz, on hearing it, came to Lahore and encamped near the tomb of Hazrat Ishan (Mian Mir). The battle began on the 17th March, 1747. Adina Beg led the attack and succeeded in forcing Mumin Khan out of his trenches. Next day Shahnawaz delivered the assault in person. Mir Mumin was defeated and captured. Yahiya's soldiers, whose salary had been in arrears for the past four or five months since the commencement of hostilities, flocked into the city and clamoured for the payment of their dues. They were easily seduced by Shahnawaz Khan. He entered Lahore quite unopposed on the 21st March, 1747, seized the property of Yahiya and took him captive. He appointed Kauramal his Diwan in lieu of Lakhpat Rae and confirmed Adina Beg Khan in the civil and military charge of the Jullundur Doab.[2]

Under Shahnawaz Khan, March, 1747—January, 1748

The usurpation of the Panjab government could not be brooked

[1]Ratan Singh, 389-90; Gian Singh, 678.

[2]Anand Ram, 289-95 and 304; Ashub, II, 451-2; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 73a-b; Khushwaqt Rae, 76; *Ibrat-Miqal*, II, 55a; Schan Lal, I, 113-4; Ali-ud-din, 106b.

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by the Delhi court, but no drastic action was taken against Shahnawaz Khan, because the Wazir, Qamar-ud-din Khan, first wanted to secure the release of his son-in-law Yahiya Khan, who in case of the despatch of a force from Delhi might be put to death. Nawab Qamar-ud-din-Khan wrote several conciliatory and then threatening letters to Shahnawaz Khan demanding the liberation of Yahiya Khan. But he always received a reply that Yahiya Khan's freedom from captivity depended on his own confirmation in the viceroyalty of the Panjab under a royal rescript.[1]

Yahiya Khan found means four months later by the contrivance of his aunt, Dardana Begam, who was a sister of Zakariya Khan and wife of Jani Khan, to get himself conveyed in a Khwan, a vessel three feet in length and two feet in breadth, railed in and covered with a cupola of lattice work, over which a piece of broad cloth was thrown to shelter the whole. He was safely carried out of his prison-house, through the guards to the city gate, where mounting on an excellent horse already awaiting him, he set out at a gallop and was soon out of his brother's reach. In a few days he arrived at Shahjahanabad to remove a great anxiety from his father-in-law's mind.[2]

Shahnawaz Khan knew that he had hopelessly broken with the Delhi Emperor by ousting his lawful nominee, but he had hoped for reconciliation so long as his elder brother was in captivity. But with his escape at the end of July this ray of hope was also gone. He made one more effort. He despatched his agent to the imperial capital with the request that his misdeed be forgiven and that he should be appointed the deputy viceroy under the Wazir. The envoy reached Delhi on the 3rd September, 1747, but nothing came out of this embassy.[3]

Shahnawaz now felt sure that the retribution of the Emperor and his Wazir must fall upon him. Consequently he turned his mind in all directions to secure support. At this juncture the political horizon of India was suddenly overcast with clouds. Nadir Shah was murdered on the 9th June, 1747, and his generalship

[1]Ashub, II, 452; *Bayan*, 161; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 55a.

[2]Anand Ram, 304-5; *Bayan*, 161; Ashub, II, 452-3; *Siyar*, III, 12; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 73b; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 55a; Ali-ud-din, 106b. (When Shahnawaz Khan got angry with his aunt, she silenced him with a single sentence. "If by chance Yahiya Khan had imprisoned you, I would have secured your release also by any means in my power." *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 55a; *Bayan*, 161).

[3]*Anand Ram*, 300; *Sarkar*, I, 195.

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passed on to Ahmad Abdali, who conquered Kandhar and Kabul and became master of Afghanistan as far as Peshawar. Though it was a big kingdom, it was not sufficient for his ambition. He determined to try his luck further. With Peshawar as a suitable base, the man-power of Afghanistan behind him and no hindrance in front, India, the El Dorado of western people, became his object.

Adina Beg's double-tongued skill

Shahnawaz Khan was now advised by Adina Beg Khan to open communications with Ahmad Shah Abdali.[1] Sayyid Ghulam Husain says that "the adviser of the young Viceroy at this time was Adina Beg Khan, who was a devil under the appearance of man. He was resolved to overset his master's power and to raise his own on its ruins. He addressed him in these words: 'you are no more than a nephew to Wazir Qamar-ud-din Khan, but your elder brother, Yahiya Khan, is his son-in-law besides. He has gone to make complaint against you in the court. Rest assured that neither the Emperor nor the Wazir would leave you undisturbed in the full enjoyment of two governments. You have only one recourse of joining Ahmad Shah Abdali's party. He is a powerful and successful man and openly aspires to the crown. He will look upon your joining him as the most unexpected favour which heaven could confer upon him.' Consequently, Shahnawaz Khan despatched his envoy to Ahmad Shah with the message, 'Crown to Ahmad Shah and Wazirship to Shahnawaz.'[2] He also declared himself a convert to the Shia religion and in his official seal replaced the names of the Mughal Emperors by the Twelve Imams with a view to win the favour of the Iranian soldiery of Ahmad Shah.[3]

Adina Beg Khan then probably to secure the confidence of the Delhi Government, informed the Delhi Wazir that Shahnawaz Khan was turning a rebel against the authority of the Mughal Emperor and that he had invited help of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Wazir was very much perturbed at this news, and he at once wrote to Shahnawaz Khan a conciliatory and affectionate letter saying that 'their family, at all times attached to the Emperors of India, had never been defiled by the crime of ingratitude and treason. Beware of such a crime; beware of thinking that a traitor can

[1] *Siyar*, III, 16.
[2] Miskin, 40; *Siyar*, III, 17; Ali-ud-din, 106b.
[3] *Bayan*, 160; *Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 145; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 55a.

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Hashmatullah Khan, lost his life on that day.[1]

Adina Beg's battle with the Abdali

The battle raged in this manner till evening. At dusk the Indian soldiers, thinking the fighting over, began to retire to their camps in complete disorder, as was usual with them. They were attacked by the Afghans, who showered on them such sharp volleys of musket fire that they were hopelessly routed. No Indian commander came forward to rally the fleeing soldiers, except Adina Beg Khan, who finding the cause of Shahnawaz Khan hopeless, wished to retain his confidence by a determined action only for a short time. He took shelter under the walled city and continued the fight, keeping the Afghans from proceeding farther than the tomb of Hazrat Ishan. Shahnawaz Khan had guarded all the gates and streets and had sent a force under Jumla Khan,[2] an Afghan of Kasur, who instead of fighting, immediately went over to the enemy with his whole force.

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Abdali occupies Lahore

Shahnawaz Khan had asked the Emperor and the Wazir for assistance, but no reinforcements were forthcoming. Finding, Lahore untenable he decamped for Delhi, leaving Lahore at dead of night the same day, with all the Jewellery and gold he could carry. His example was followed by his officers and soldiers, and Lahore fell into the hands of the conqueror without any further opposition. The outer portions of the city, especially Mughalpura, were completely laid waste. But the city was spared at the request of Mir Mumin Khan, Sayyid Jamil-ud-din Khan, Mir Amin Khan, Mir Nemat Khan, Lakhpat Rae, Surat Singh and others, who had now escaped from prison, on the promise of a ransom of 30 lakhs, 22 lakhs of which was paid the same day.[3]

Shahnawaz Khan had left the whole of his camp equipage, artillery, elephants, camels and horses, in the possession of Ahmad

[1] *Bayan*, 163-4; *Siyar*, III, 17; *Husain Shahi*, 20; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 74a; *Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 146; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 56a; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 6; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 123.

[2] Zila Khan of Elliot, VIII, 106 and Jali Khan of Sohan Lal, I, 123, is Jumla Khan, an Afghan chief of Kasur.

[3] Anand Ram, 328; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 74a; Ali-ud-din, 108a; Sohan Lal, I, 123.

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Shah Durrani. These contributed greatly to augment his military resources, as well as to add to his pomp and glory. Abdali stayed in Lahore for a month and a quarter and compelled all the chiefs of the Panjab, including Ranjit Dev of Jammu, to render him allegiance and pay homage. With a view to exercise the prerogative of royalty and following the Indian custom, he also struck his own coins in Lahore.[1] Thus when he felt quite confident of meeting the imperial army on an equal footing, he left Lahore for Delhi on the 19th February leaving Jumla Khan of Kasur as his governor in the provincial capital.[2]

Adina Beg in the battle of Manupur

The flight of Shahnawaz Khan to Delhi had stirred that indolent court and the Emperor despatched a huge army of two lakhs under Wazir Qamar-ud-din Khan to check the progress of Ahmad Shah Abdali, who continued his advance until he met the Mughal army at Manupur on 11th March, 1748. In this battle Wazir Qamar-ud-din Khan was killed; but his son, Muin-ul-Mulk, defeated Ahmad Shah who fled back to Afghanistan. Adina Beg Khan, who was in close attendance on Muin-ul-Mulk, was twice wounded in this battle.[3]

Adina Beg Khan under Muin-ul-Mulk, April, 1748 to November, 1753

After the battle of Manupur, the imperial army rested on the Satluj till 12th April. Then under Prince Ahmad Shah it left for Delhi and Muin-ul-Mulk went to Lahore to take up his new post as Viceroy of the Panjab, to which he had been appointed by Emperor Muhammad Shah. Muin-ul-Mulk appointed Kauramal his Diwan and confirmed Adina Beg Khan in the Faujdari of the Jullundur Doab. Muin found absolute anarchy prevailing in the country, for which the Sikhs were chiefly responsible. Haro Singh and Karora Singh in the Sarhind territory, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in the Jullundur Doab, Lajja Singh and Hari Singh in the Bari

[1]For details cf. *JASB*, LIV, 1885, p. 69.

[2]*Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, 6-7; *Anand Ram*, 325-32; *Bayan*, 164; *Zafar Namah*, 3a-4b; *Siyar*, III, 17-8; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 97; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 74a; *Irshad-ul-Mustqim*, 294b; *Tarikh-e-Amad*, 7; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 125-6; *Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 147-8; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 56b-57a; Chakhar *Gulzar-e-Shujai*, 523-4; Ali-ud-din. 107b-108a; *Husain Shahi*, 25.

[3]About Adina Beg. cf. *Anand Ram*, 358; *Zafar Namah*, 9b; Sarkar, I, 288-9.

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Doab and Charat Singh in the Rachna Doab were audaciously creating disturbances everywhere.[1]

Ordered to suppress the Sikhs

Muin was not the man to allow such a state of affairs to exist. Having established himself in Lahore by June, 1748, he despatched punitive expeditions in pursuit of the Sikhs. The laurels which Muin had won at the battle of Manupur inspired awe in the minds of Sikhs, who retreated before his contingents. At the same time Adina Beg Khan was given strict instructions to curb the power of the Sikhs, who had become supreme in the northern hilly portions of the Doab. He 'began as formerly to intrigue with the Sicks, and took no effectual means to suppress them.'[2] He was compelled to lead an expedition against them and in the engagement that followed both the parties lost heavily, the Sikhs alone leaving about 600 dead on the battle-field. Adina Beg Khan, in view of the superior number of Sikh forces, had to give up the struggle. He returned to Jullundur, the seat of his government, and sought help from Muin.[3] In the meantime the rains had set in and all further operations were suspended.

Adina Beg opposes Muin's policy of relaxation

After the rainy season the Sikhs again began to stir out in search of fresh adventures, and in October they decided to celebrate the Diwali festival at Hari Mandir. They bathed in the tank, said prayers at the temple, illuminated the whole place and made offerings to the Holy Granth. All this they did, but they were not oblivious of the impending danger from the government of Muin-ul-Mulk. Accordingly five hundred of them took shelter within the fort of Ram Rauni, while the rest hid themselves in the neighbouring jungle with a view to render help to the garrison in case of an emergency.

Khushwaqt Rae, the author of *Kitab-e-Tarikh-e-Panjab*, folios 83-4 continues the story in the following words: 'Nawab Mir Mannu, on hearing this news, marched with troops to chastise them. Under his orders Adina Beg Khan also joined him. Having arrived

[1]Sohan Lal, I, 127-8.
[2]Browne, II, 16.
[3]Sohan Lal, I, 128; Browne, II, 16; Bakhtmal, 67.

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at Amritsar they laid siege to the fort of Ram Rauni, which is now known as Ramgarh. The siege continued for four months and daily skirmishes took place.[1] During this period two hundred Sikhs of the garrison were killed. The rest wrote to Jassa Singh Thoka (carpenter), who was in the service of Adina Beg Khan, that he, being on the side of the Muslims, was the cause of their ruin, and if he did not come that day to their help and rescue, he would never be readmitted into the fold of their religion.[2]

"Jassa Singh, in consideration of his co-religionists, deserting Adina Beg Khan entered the fort in the night.[3] It strengthened the perseverance of the besieged. At this time Kauramal was the Diwan, who was a believer in the religion of Nanak Shah. Jassa Singh Thoka sent a message to the Diwan to this effect, 'The garrison can secure relief only through your efforts. If you try, three hundred lives can be saved.' Kauramal made a request to the Nawab, saying, 'The Sikhs always cause confusion and disorder. It will be advisable, if you settle something for these people. They will not create disturbance afterwards, and I will be responsible for it.' Adina Beg Khan dissented (apparently out of jealousy for Kauramal). Muin said, 'Whatever Kauramal does, is always to the advantage of the government.' Adina Beg Khan remarked, 'Goodness to evil-doers is doing evil to good people.' The Nawab replied, 'It is better to stitch the mouth of a dog with morsels.' He approved of Kauramal's suggestion, granted them one-fourth of the revenue of the parganah of Patti and came back to Lahore. Kauramal took a number of Sikhs in his pay aud showed them all indulgence. Being a believer of the Guru he paid the Sikhs a fine of Rs. 5 per day for smoking."[4]

[1]Ratan Singh (401) says that Muin's troops were very much harassed by the night attacks of the Sikhs who came in large numbers to succour their brethren in the fort.

[2]Jassa Singh had been excommunicated from the Khalsa brotherhood for killing his daughter, Ratan Singh, 402, Gian Singh, 687) and probably for deserting them when deputed to Adina Beg Khan.

[3]Jassa Singh headed a contingent of 100 Sikhs and 60 Hindus on this occasion. Ratan Singh, 402; Gian Singh, 687.

[4]Cf. Ratan Singh, 400-4 and Gian Singh, 684-7. 'It is supposed,' says Forster, I, 314, 'that their force would then have been annihilated, had not this people found a strenuous advocate in his minister Kauramal, who was himself of the Khulasah Sect and diverted Meer Munnoo from reaping the full fruits of the superiority he had gained.' Cf. Malcolm, 91-2.

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Adina Beg shot down Kauramal

Diwan Kauramal was the most trusted and the most capable officer of Muin-ul-Mulk. The Viceroy was so pleased with his valour, diplomacy and loyalty that he appointed him Governor of Multan province after conferring upon him the title of Maharajah. Muin always sought his advice on all important matters. Adina Beg's unbounded ambition could not tolerate the existence of such a formidable personality and he was always on the look-out to ruin him. This opportunity was afforded to him during the third invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani.

The Durrani entered the Panjab in December, 1751, and besieged Lahore for four months. Neither Abdali for want of artillery nor Muin for lack of reinforcements from Delhi could make short work of this long affair. The whole country around Lahore within a radius of 80 kms. was entirely laid waste by the Afghans with the result that 'no lamp was lighted in any house for a distance of three marches and an extreme scarcity of grain prevailed in the camps of both the armies.' In the city of Lahore flour was sold at two kilos to the rupee and in place of grass the horses were fed on old and rotten bags and chopped straw of huts even of ten years' standing.[2]

When starvation stared them in the face, Muin wanted to precipitate an action, and accordingly he called a council of war on the 4th March, 1752. Some desired peace, whereas others were for fighting a decisive action. It was pointed out by Kauramal that the Nawab's troops were mostly raw levies and were no match in the open for the hardy warriors of the north-west, that the country for miles around had been foraged and ruined and therefore Abdali's camp was also short of provisions, and that shortly afterwards hot weather would set in and Abdali's troops, finding the sun intolerable would either return or attack them at disadvantage.[3]

This was the wisest plan, but Adina Beg, who was always opposed to Kauramal from policy, declared in favour of an immediate action.[4] The Viceroy, prompted by his own ardour and courage,

[1]Miskin, 75.

[2]Khushwaqt Rae, 85-6; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 85a.

[3]Siyar, III, 44.

[4]Khazana-e-Amira, 98; *Farhat-un-Nazirin* in Elliot, VIII, 168; *Siyar*, III, 44; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 85b; *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg*, 54a; Bakhtmal, 70; Khushwaqt Rae, 87; *Irshad-ul-Mustqim*, 294b; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 8; *Tarikh-e-Salatin-Afghan*, 134; Shah Yusaf, 58b.

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listened to the importunities of Adina Beg Khan, who was actuated by the aim of bringing ruin on Muin and Kauramal and securing his own appointment to the viceroyalty of the Panjab. Issuing from his entrenchments Muin advanced towards Abdali's camp,[1] and engaged him in actions on 6th March, 1752, but was driven back with great loss. Kauramal, on coming to his aid, was slain. Adina Beg Khan treacherously withdrew his troops and Muin was forced to surrender. Farhat-un-Nazirin in Elliot, VIII, 168, charges Adina Beg with shooting Kauramal from behind, while Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan accuses Bazid Khan of Kasur of this crime. Ali-ud-din, 111b, says that Kauramal was shot by some person at the instigation of Adina Beg Khan. All other authorities hold that Kauramal was killed by some person from amongst Muin's troops, and it seems probable that Adina Beg, if not directly, was responsible for his death in an indirect manner.[2]

Muin's interview with the Abdali

Muin went fearlessly to Abdali's camp, attended only by three persons. Shah Vali Khan and Jahan Khan, the highest Afghan nobles, received him and presented him before Ahmad Shah Durrani. The Durrani was struck with the noble bearing, boldness of address and frankness of manners of this young man of parts, the victor of Manupur, at whose hands he had sustained a defeat in 1748. The following interesting conversation took place between them:

Durrani: 'Why didn't you submit earlier?'
Muin: 'I had then another master to serve.'
Durrani: 'Why didn't that master come to your help?'
Muin: 'He thought his servant could take care of himself.'
Durrani: 'What would you have done if you had captured me?'
Muin: 'I would have cut off your head and sent it to my master at Delhi.'
Durrani: 'Now that you are at my mercy, what should I do to you?'
Muin: 'If you are a shopkeeper sell me (for a ransom), if you are a butcher kill me, but if you are a king, grant me your grace and pardon.'

[1] *Siyar*, III, 44; Sarkar, I, 431.

[2] Adina Beg's enmity with Kauramal is admitted by *Khazana-e-Amira*, 98; *Masasir-ul-Umara*, I, 360; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 85b; *Irshad-ul-Mustqim*, 294b; and Shah Yusaf, 58b.

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Durrani: 'May God bless you! I pardon you.'[1]

Ahmad Shah embraced him, conferred upon him the title of Farzand Khan Bahadur Rustam-e-Hind, granted him a robe of honour, an aigrette for the crest and the very turban he was wearing, and installed him in the subahdari of the Panjab on his behalf.

Adina Beg leads an expedition against the Sikhs

After the war, when matters returned to normal, reports of Sikh ravages began to pour into Lahore from all parts of the country. Muin-ul-Mulk immediately despatched Sadiq Beg Khan in conjunction with Adina Beg Khan to punish the Sikhs in the Jullundur Doab. Adina Beg Khan hailed this opportunity to wash away the suspicions attached to his treachery at Lahore during the recent campaign of the Durrani.[2]

Both the commanders marched from Lahore with a strong force and entered the Jullundur Doab in pursuit of the Sikhs. They received intelligence that the Sikhs had assembled near Makhowal (Anandpur) probably to celebrate the festival.[3] The Sikhs were taken quite unawares, because they had received news of the Durrani siege of Lahore and were sure that neither Muin nor his officers would be free to turn their attention to them. They were deep in the midst of their festivities when Adina Beg Khan and Sadiq Beg Khan suddenly fell upon them and put a large number of them to the sword, while the rest were forced to escape for their life. But such was their hardihood and doggedness that soon after they began to plunder the country again in small parties.[4] Malcolm blames Adina Beg Khan for the Sikh plunders. He says: "That able but artful chief considered this turbulent tribe in no other light than as the means of his personal advancement. He was careful not to reduce them altogether, but, after defeating them in an action which was fought near Makhowal, he entered into a secret understanding with them, by which, though their excursions were limited, they

[1]Miskin, 79; *Husain Shahi*, 32-3; Khushwaqt Rae, 88; *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 54b; *Sohan Lal*, I, 134-5; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 8; *Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 154; Ali-ud-din, 112a-b.

[2]Browne, II, 17.

[3]ibid, II, 17 calls it Holi, which is apparently wrong, as it fell on the 18th February, when Muin was shut up in trenches at Lahore hard pressed by the Abdali.

[4]Browne, II, 17.

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joyed a security to which they had been unaccustomed, and from which they gathered strength and resources for future efforts."[1] Adina Beg always tried and with almost uniform success to keep the confidence of the Viceroy of the Panjab, under whom he was serving. He found Muin following a ruthless policy towards the Sikhs and he kept him in humour by sending him from time to time 40 or 50 Sikh captives from the Jullundur Doab, who were as a rule killed with wooden hammers at Shahid Ganj, Lahore.[2]

Founded the new town of Adinanagar, 1752

In the course of his travels in the Upper Bari Doab, either upon official duty or upon hunting expeditions, Adina Beg was much attracted by the fertile district of Riyarki, now called Gurdaspur and in 1752 he established a town, named after him Adinanagar, at a place 16 kms. north of Gurdaspur, on the Hasli canal or Shah Nahar.[3]

Mughlani Begam seizes the government of the province, 1753

Muin-ul-Mulk died suddenly, probably from the effects of poison, on the 3rd November, 1753. His death was a signal for the forces of disruption and disorder to make headway. Muin had left a two-year-old son, who was now proclaimed Viceroy, but the real power lay in the hands of the masterful widow of Muin, Surayya Begam (by some called Murad Begam, popularly known as the Mughlani Begam), a lady of remarkable address and unbounded ambition.

Bhikari Khan, surnamed Roshan-ud-daulah Rustam-e-Jang, a Turki general and courtier of Lahore, who was 'the dearest friend and most trusted factotum of Muin,' and the 'centre of all affairs in the province in his time,'[4] revolted against the Begam. She cleverly won over the other Turki nobles and succeeded in removing the threat of a civil war. But another catastrophe soon fell upon her,

[1]Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, 92.

[2]Miskin, 84. [Gah bagahe Adina Beg Khan az Zila Doaba chehal panjah Sikhan ra gariftah me faristadand. Badastur bazarb panchuchae me kushtand.]

[3]*Ahwal-e-Adina Beg*, 61a-b, *Gurdaspur Gazetteer*, 1891, p. 26, says that it was founded in 1730, AD. (1143 AH) as shown by the Abjad chronogram, "Khujista Bina." But according to the value of the letters of this chronogram we get 1121 AH. or 1709 AD. Khujista Bina consists of eight Persian letters.

[4]*Siyar*, III, 51; Sarkar, I, 439.

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which cut off her hopes and left her in the lurch for some time. The Baby Governor died early in May, 1754, displaying the same symptoms of poisoning as his father. Many people believed that Bhikari Khan poisoned the innocent (child) through eunuch Zamurrad who had access to him.[1]

The domineering Begam now openly placed herself at the head of the government of the Panjab and despatched her agents to Kandhar as well as to Delhi to secure approval. The new Emperor, Alamgir II, appointed Mumin Khan Governor of the Panjab on 25th October, 1754, but his authority was negatived by the Begam, in whose hands lay the real control of government.[2] The Mughlani Begam established herself securely in the seat of the provincial government. But she soon fell into a course of pleasure and abandoned modesty.[3] Eunuchs were the only medium through whom the Mughlani Begam conducted the state affairs. The Diwan, Bakhshi and other government officials received her orders through eunuchs who never agreed among themselves and constantly quarrelled.[4]

The eunuchs' rule and the Begam's profligacy disappointed the Turkish nobles who came from the same stock in Central Asia as the Begam's father and husband. They were resolved to defy such a degraded authority. Bhikari Khan was the first to rebel in January, 1754. He was confined by her in her palace and was beaten to death in April, 1755.[5] In December, 1754, the Mughalia courtiers decided that, "as a fissure had appeared in the family honour of the late Nawab,"[6] the best course for them was to entrust Khwajah Mirza Khan with the administration of the province. Khwajah Mirza came to Lahore, confined the Begam in a house and assumed the viceroyalty of the Panjab.[7] But she cleverly managed to depute Khwajah Abdullah Khan, her mother's brother as well as the brother of Zakariya Khan, who had ruled over Panjab from July to December 1745, to Ahmad Shah Abdali. His troops

[1]Miskin, 97-8.
[2]*Delhi Chronicle*, 115-6.
[3]Miskin, 99, 122, 159-60, 230-1; Ghulam Ali, 26; Shiv Prashad, 33b; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 98-9 (All contemporary authorities).
[4]Miskin, 98.
[5]ibid, 107.
[6]ibid, 99.
[7]ibid, 104.

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restored the Begam to authority[1] in April, 1755. In July, 1755, Khwajah Abdullah confined the Begam to her mother's house and became undisputed master of Lahore.[2]

Adina Beg Khan became independent at Jullundur

In the face of such confusion and chaos, Adina Beg Khan became independent of both the Delhi Emperor and the Lahore Viceroy. He increased his resources and strengthened his position, with the result that he was the only man who succeeded in maintaining peace and order in the country under his charge. But he did not have smooth sailing for long, as he was soon called upon to deal with a serious menace which arose from the east. It was the invasion of Qutb Khan Rohilla.

Qutb Khan Rohilla seized Sarhind 1755

Qutb Khan had with Najib-ud-daulah joined the Emperor's troops in the battle between Prince Ahmad Shah and Safdar Jang. He was not a Rohilla by caste, but as he was in the service of the Rohillas, he came to be known as a Rohilla himself. He was given the parganahs of Kairana, Barot, Sardhana and Kandhla by way of pay. These territories were afterwards given to the Marathas by Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk. Qutb Khan felt exasperated at the loss of his jagir. So he made up his mind to defy the Delhi Emperor. He entered the Sarhind territory on 11th March, 1755, and took to plunder and rapine. He ravaged Sonepat, Panipat, Karnal, Azimabad (Taraori) and Thanesar and marched upon Sarhind after defeating an imperial force at Karnal. Sadiq Beg was the governor of the Sarhind province. His Afghan troops, finding a tribesman coming against the Governor, clamoured for pay and threatened to join the enemy. Sadiq Beg had to evacuate Sarhind and fled towards Lahore.

The Wazir pressed the Emperor to pursue Qutb Khan, but he declined. The Wazir also procrastinated. Ultimately he left Delhi on 13th April, 1755, and at Sonepat on 15th April he learnt that Qutb Khan had seized Sarhind. He halted there to watch further developments.

Adina Beg defeated Qutb Khan and seized Sarhind province

Sadiq Beg approached the Jullundur Governor for help. Adina

[1] Miskim, 106-7.

[2] *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 112.

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Beg Khan could not tolerate the existence of such a formidable foe in his close neighbourhood and he made up his mind to try his strength with the invader. He was also tempted by the prospect of adding one more province to his charge. Thus says the contemporary Delhi diarist: "Adina Beg, who had been the ruler of the place for years and whom all the zamindars of that country obeyed on account of his strictness and ability, gathered together all the zamindars and an army of the Sikhs, the worshippers of Nanak, and thus had about 50,000 horse and nearly the same number of foot, alongwith cannons, light artillery (Rahkala), long firelocks (Jizairls), matchlocks and rockets."[1] He marched to the ghat opposite Rupar. On hearing this Qutb Khan with great spirit and bravery (left Sarhind) and crossed the river to oppose Adina Beg Khan. Jamal Khan of Malerkotla with his brothers and sons joined Qutb Khan at the head of a large army. An engagement between the parties took place on 11th April, 1755. Qutb Khan, Jamal Khan and other chiefs of the army lost their lives and Adina Beg Khan was victorious.

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The author of *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan* describes an interesting incident in this connection. He says that in the engagement Adina Beg Khan had been defeated first and his commander-in-chief, Aziz Beg, along with other officers had taken to flight. Adina Beg Khan was also about to flee, when his Diwan, Lala Bishambar Das, who was close by him on horseback, said: "It is a matter of regret if you run away at this time. You will lose all respect. If we die fighting in this battle, we will leave a name behind us; otherwise we will be put to shame in both the worlds." Adina Beg Khan at once made up his mind to offer further resistance. He organised his troops and delivered a sally. A bullet hit Qutb Khan Rohilla and he died instantaneously. His troops lost heart and were routed by Adina Beg Khan, who acquired immense booty.

Adina Beg took over the administration of Sarhind and its dependencies and brought the country up to Shahabad, Mustafabad, Thanesar, Ghuram and Mansurpur into his possession. He then wrote to the Delhi Wazir: "The zamindars of this country are refractory and require force to keep them in order. If you intend to come here bring with you a large army and abundant war material, otherwise your coming here would be inadvisable. Leave this territory to me. "The Wazir, knowing his own military impotence and

[1] *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 85-6.

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poverty, gave up the idea of advancing and by the advice of Najib decided on crossing over to the eastern bank of the Jamuna. This victory brought not only one more province to Adina Beg Khan, but added new lustre to his glory. The Delhi Emperor conferred upon him the coveted title of "Zafar Jang Bahadur," and all the hill chiefs, including Saif Ali Khan of Kangra, submitted to him and paid tribute.[1]

Adina Beg occupied Lahore, but lost it, 1755

Having secured his position in two important provinces of Jullundur and Sarhind, Adina Beg Khan turned his attention towards Lahore, where a favourable situation was arising for him. On account of his cruel deeds Khwajah Abdullah became very unpopular; his troops deserted him and people hated him. Adina Beg Khan took advantage of the unrest prevailing in the provincial capital and marched upon Lahore, drove Abdullah towards Multan, and appointed Sadiq Beg Khan his deputy to manage state affairs.[2]

The Begam conveyed news of this to Ahmad Shah Abdali at Kandhar and sought help from him. He despatched Jahan Khan with two special contingents. Sadiq Beg fled to Sarhind about December, 1755, and the Begam was restored to the Subahdari with Khwajah Abdullah as her deputy.[3]

The battle of Khadur

By this time the Sikhs had become very powerful. They harassed Adina Beg Khan, because he was not prepared to allow them to create disturbances in his territory. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the celebrated leader of the Dal Khalsa, 'was engaged in perpetual contests with Adina Beg Khan with varying success; but in November, 1755, he gained a decided advantage at Kaddur, and compelled the Khan to cede to him Fatahabad on the Bias.'[4]

Adina Beg invested with the government of Lahore and Multan, 1756

The Mughlani Begam was kept under surveillance by Abdullah at Lahore. She resented it. Now she resolved to regain full

[1] *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 76-88; *Delhi Chronicle*, 122. Cf. Chahar Gulzur-e-Shujai, 461a; *Tarikh-Muzaffari*, 98b-99a; *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 56b-57a; Ahmad Shah, 880-1.

[2] ibid, 124.

[3] ibid, 151; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 9.

[4] Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, 458.

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authority through the Delhi Government. It was under the supreme control of Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk, who was betrothed to her daughter. She wrote secret letters to him repeatedly asking for help.[1]

The Wazir had received constant reports of the misgovernment of the Begam from the discontented nobility.[2] He was also in financial difficulties. So he decided to seek at Lahore wealth[3] and a bride for himself and two provinces of Lahore and Multan for the Empire.[4] In order to deceive Adina Beg Khan he pretended to go on a hunting expedition with the Imperial Prince Ali Gauhar. He left Shahjahanabad on 15th January, 1756, and reached Sarhind on 7th February, 1756.[5] There his further progress was stopped by Adina Beg Khan. He wrote to the Wazir to send one eunuch with two or three thousand troops, promising to add his own contingent to them and to secure him possession of Lahore.[6] The Wazir agreed to this proposal and sent Nasim Khan with nearly three thousand troops to Adina Beg.

Adina Beg Khan despatched Sadiq Beg Khan with 10,000 troops of his own. All these soldiers arrived at Lahore in a few days. From here they rode out in full glory to the Begam's residence to offer their salaams. Then they paid a visit of courtesy to Khwajah Abdullah Khan, brother of the Khan Bahadur. The Khwajah, in accordance with court etiquette, conferred upon Sadiq Beg Khan a khilat. Abdullah Khan guessed that he would be captured shortly afterwards and being frightened left the city the same night and fled away to Jammu.[7]

On the following day the Mughlani Begam triumphantly occupied her official residence and took the reins of government in her hands once more. She spent a month in preparations for the departure of her daughter, Umda Begam, and sent her with a suitable dowry in jewels and cash, accompanied by a full household of eunuchs, tents and other necessary requisites, at the head of an escort of 3,000 troops. The bride arrived at the camp of the Wazir on 4th March, 1756. The Wazir afterwards secured the person of the Begam forcibly through Sadiq Beg Khan, and took her with him

[1]Miskin, 113-4.
[2]Ali-ud-din, 113a.
[3]Ghulam Ali, 25.
[4]Khair-ud-din's *Ibrat Namah*, in Elliot, VIII, 242.
[5]*Delhi Chronicle*, 130; Miskin, 114.
[6]Miskin, 114.
[7]ibid, 114. Cf. *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 151.

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to Delhi.[1]

The Wazir gave the government of Lahore and Multan to Adina Beg Khan for a tribute of thirty lakhs a year, appointed Sayyid Jamil-ud-din Khan to Lahore, as Adina's assistant, and afterwards returned to the imperial capital on 9th May, 1756.[2]

Though provided with an inadequate force and an empty treasury, Sayyid Jamil-ud-din restored order and governed Lahore well.[3] But his rule was short-lived. Khwajah Abdullah Khan went to Kandhar and brought back a strong Afghan force,[4] before which the Sayyid retired from Lahore and joined Adina Beg in the Jullundur Doab.[5] The invaders captured and completely sacked the city on 4th October, 1756[6] Khwajah Abdullah Khan was appointed Governor of the province for the Durrani, but his administration was harassed by the Sikhs, whose power was now growing formidable.[7]

Adina Beg Khan driven away by Afghans, November, 1756

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The Mughlani Begam, chafing under the high-handedness of her son-in-law, Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk, addressed some secret letters to Ahmad Shah Abdali, inviting him to invade India, and promised to disclose to him places of hidden treasures in Delhi.[8] He was also invited by Najib-ud-daulah[9] and the Delhi Emperor.[10] Ahmad Shah Abdali accepted these invitations, and advanced with a large army to Peshawar in November, 1756. An advance-guard under his son, Timur Shah, and commander-in-chief, Jahan Khan, pursued Adina Beg Khan who lay encamped with his force at Jalalabad, some 40 kms. south-east of Amritsar. Adina Beg accompanied

[1]Miskin, 114-6 and 119; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 130-1; Shakir, 79-80; *Siyar*, III, 53; *Delhi Chronicle*, 131; Sarkar, II, 60.

[2]Miskin, 120-4; *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 131; *Delhi Chronicle*, 131 and 132; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 52; *Maasir*, III, 890-1; *Siyar*, III, 53; *Tarikh e-Muzaffari*, 98b; Ghulam Ali, 26-7; Shiv Prashad, 33b; Shakir, 79-80; *Ibrat Miqal*, II, 71a-b; *Tarikh-e-Salatin-e-Afghanan*, 156; Bakhtmal, 76; Sohan Lal, I, 139-40; *Gulistan-e-Rahmat*, 51; Ali-ud-din, 113a-114a; Sarkar, II, 60-1.

[3]Cf. Bakhtmal, 76; Khushwaqt Rae, 90; Sohan Lal, I, 140; Miskin, 124.

[4]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 151-2.

[5]Miskin, 125.

[6]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 152.

[7]Miskin, 126.

[8]Ali-ud-din, 114b.

[9]Nur-ud-din, 14b.

[10]For Emperor's invitation, cf. Francklin's *Shah Aulum*, 44.

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by Sadiq Beg and Jamil-ud-din abandoned his camp to the Afghans and fled to Hansi and Hissar, like a truant boy from school."[1] After some time he retired to the hills[2] in Hoshiarpur district in the region of Garli in Bharwain written as Khali Balwan in the manuscript of Tahmas Khan Miskin.

Received a khilat of confirmation in the Jullundur Doab, 1757

The year 1757 saw the Mughlani Begam's fortune at its zenith and at its nadir. During Abdali's campaign she had attained the invader's highest favour. Her services to him were indeed invaluable. It was she who secured him the virgin tributes from the imperial harem. She was responsible for procuring for him the hoarded treasures of all the court nobles of Delhi by telling him the exact amount of wealth in their possession. One day she presented him several trays full of gems and jewels, and thereby won his favour.[3]

He grew more kind and generous to the Begam when she accompanied him in his campaign south of Delhi and granted her Jullundur Doab, Jammu and Kashmir as a fief. She appointed one of her relations, Khwajah Ibrahim Khan, to the government of Kashmir, confirmed the Raja of Jammu in the administration on her behalf and invited Adina Beg Khan to take over the charge of the Jullundur Doab.[4] Miskin took the khilat for Adina Beg Khan, delivered it to him in the hills and stayed with him for some time.

Meanwhile Adina Beg received a firman from Timur Shah and a letter from Jahan Khan to this effect: "Ahmad Shah Durrani had intended to go to the Deccan first, but afterwards he gave up this idea and conferred this country as far as the boundary of Sarhind on us (May, 1757). It falls upon you now to present yourself at our service. In case of non-compliance with this order the whole country of the Doab will be laid waste and you will be pursued in the hills."[5] Adina Beg Khan preferred the Begam's suzerainty to the overlordship of Timur and Jahan Khan, and sent no reply.

Receiving no answer from Adina Beg Khan, Jahan Khan marched into the Doab and gave over many towns to pillage. Adina Beg

[1] *Khazana-e-Amira*, 99.
[2] Cf. Forster, I, 317.
[3] Miskin, 138; Sarkar, II, 67.
[4] Miskin, 140.
[5] ibid, 145.

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Khan then informed him that he was ready to undertake the administration of the Doab under Timur Shah provided he was exempted from attending his court at Lahore.[1] Timur Shah, sensible of his own inexperience and Adina Beg's skill in government and revenue matters, resolved to obtain his services and wrote him several civil letters. Finally he sent him the patent as well as the khilat of the Doab on a definite undertaking of 36 lakhs of rupees to be remitted to him annually at Lahore, and exempted him from personally attending the Lahore court.[2] For a surety of his conduct and the punctual payment of the tribute, his agent Dilaram was kept at Lahore in constant attendance at the court.[3]

After a time a quarrel arose between Jahan Khan and Adina Beg Khan about the payment of the tribute, and Jahan Khan imprisoned Dilaram. The Mughlani Begam intervened on his behalf and contrived his escape. But she was seized and beaten[4] by Jahan Khan whose troopers ransacked her house of all it contained and placed her in oppressive confinement.[5]

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Adina Beg's conflict with Jahan Khan, 1757

Jahan Khan then summoned Adina Beg Khan to Lahore ostensibly to seek his advice regarding measures to be taken to subdue the Sikhs. Ali-ud-din, 177a states that it was reported to Timur Shah that Adina Beg Khan possessed lakhs of rupees and the best way of securing it was to summon him to Lahore, and in case of non-compliance to attack him and dispossess him of all his riches.[6] Adina Beg Khan flatly refused to come. When threatened with consequences of his disobedience, "he despatched agents with presents to the Prince to secure his pardon for not attending in person."[7] Timur Shah granted pardon, but insisted upon his presence at Lahore, and, detaining his agents, again summoned him to his court. Adina Beg evaded compliance on the ground that his presence was badly required in his own territory to check the Sikhs, who were lying encamped in the neighbourhood and that his absence from his province

[1]Miskin, 165.

[2]ibid, 147.

[3]Miskin, 165; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 100; *Siyar*, III, 63; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 102a; Ahmad Shah, 872; *Irshad-ul-Mustqim*, 295a and 317a.

[4]Miskin, 170.

[5]ibid, 168-71.

[6]Miskin, 166; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 100; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 102a-b.

[7]*Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 55a. Cf. *Irshad-ul-Mustqim*, 317a.

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would result in its occupation by them. The Prince sent a strong detachment of his troops to seize Adina Beg Khan. But the Khan retired with his troops to the foot-hills and secured the help of the Sikhs,[1] taking a large number of them into his pay and granting them the right to plunder. He also won over Sadiq Beg Khan and Raja Bhup Singh, who commanded an army of 25,000 strong.[2]

Murad Khan with the Afghan troops crossed the Beas and prepared to attack Adina Beg Khan. The Sikhs, intoxicated with opium and bhang, under the leadership of Sodhi Wadbhag Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, fell upon the Afghans with indescribable fury inspiring the other troops with them. The Afghans were routed and their luggage looted.[3] Murad Khan fled in panic to Lahore. Adina Beg knew that he had now completely committed himself in opposition, so he gave the Sikhs leave to pillage the whole Doab, including the city of Jullundur. "The Sikh sect ravaged all the parganahs of the Doaba, particularly Jullundur, at the prompting of Adina Khan."[4]

The Sikhs were quick to seize the chance, as they expected Jahan Khan at any moment to invade the Doab. After ravaging all the districts of the Doab,[5] they entered Jullundur city, the home of Nasir Ali, who was responsible for the atrocities committed on the Sikhs at Kartarpur. Here they gave loose rein to their passion of revenge[6] indulging in the general plunder and massacre of their enemies; children were put to the sword and women were dragged out and forcibly converted to Sikhism. Many Sikhs carried off Muslim women of Jullundur as wives. The mosques of the town were defiled by pigs' blood. Nasir Ali's dead body was dug out of the grave and pig's flesh was thrust into his mouth. This was done at the orders of Sodhi Wadbhag Singh.[7]

When informed of the disastrous defeat and retreat of the Afghan

[1] *Siyar*, III, 64.

[2] Ghulam Ali, I, 55-6; Ahmad Shah, 871-2; Ganesh Das, 156.

[3] Ghulam Ali, I, 56.

[4] *Khazana-e-Amira*, 100; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 102a; *Siyar*, III, 64; *Irshad-ul-Mustqim*, 295a and 317a.

[5] *Tarikh-e-Ibrahim Khan* in Elliot, VIII, 266.

[6] 'Jullundur town was burnt by the Sikhs in 1757.' *Imperial Gazetteer*, 1908, *Punjab*, I, 421.

[7] Ratan Singh, 420-1; Gian Singh, 727-8. Bute Shah, 242b-243b, gives details about the manner in which the Sayyids restored peace in Jullundur by winning over the Sikhs.

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troops, Jahan Khan marched hurriedly from Lahore and met the vanquished army at Batala and "out of extremity of rage he ordered Murad Khan to be caned."[1]

Adina Beg Khan was not prepared for an open engagement with Jahan Khan because his own troops had been weakened by the previous battle and his allies the Sikhs had dispersed to plunder the Doab. Moreover, he had not abandoned the last hope of reconciliation with the Prince or his guardian. He therefore retired to his old resort in the Garli-Bharwain hills, which were difficult of access. Jahan Khan left Sarfraz Khan in charge of the Jullundur Doab and himself returned to Lahore. But Sarfaraz Khan could not cope with the situation. The ever-vigilant Sikhs were determined not to allow any rest to the Afghans and came down from the hills in all directions aggravating the chaos in the Doab. In the course of a month the armies that had gone to the Doab and Kashmir came back defeated, without having achieved anything. All order had vanished.[2] Khawajah Mirza Khan sent by Jahan Khan succeeded in penetrating into the fastness of Adina Beg Khan, but he was won over by the wily chief with the offer of his daughter in marriage.

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The Sikhs harassed Jahan Khan

The eye-witness Tahmas Khan Miskin says that the Sikhs wreaked their malice on Jahan Khan. They attacked the Afghans everywhere. Even the environs of Lahore were not safe. Every night thousands of Sikhs used to fall upon the city and plunder the suburbs lying outside the walls, but no force was sent out to repel them and the city gates were closed one hour after nightfall. The government of the province was rendered impotent. Bakhtmal writes: "Thousands of Sikhs in a body trampled down Lahore from one end to the other under the hoofs of their horses, and allowed none to escape unscathed."[3] The state of anarchy continued from November, 1757 to February, 1758. A Marathi despatch says: "The Sikhs gathering together by our advice began to upset Abdali's rule. From some places they expelled his outposts. They defeated Saadat Khan Afridi, plundered the whole Jullundur Doab, and forced him to flee to the hills. By order of the Subahdar, Khwajah Abed Khan came

[1]Ahmad Shah, 872.
[2]Miskin, 166; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 102a; Khushwaqt Rae, 90; Ali-ud-din, 117b.
[3]Miskin, 166; Bakhtmal, 81.

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from Lahore with 20,000 horse and foot to fight the Sikhs. In the end he was defeated. Many of his captains were slain. The whole of his camp and baggage was plundered. All the artillery left behind by Abdali was captured."[1]

Adina Beg's diplomatic foresight

The Maratha army under their eminent leaders Raghunath Rao, the Peshwa's brother, Malhar Rao Holkar and many other generals of note, had come to Delhi at the request of Imad-ul-Mulk, the Delhi Wazir. They had driven Najib-ud-daulah, the Durrani plenipotentiary, out of Delhi on 6th September, 1757. Thenceforth they roamed at large in the neighbourhood of the imperial capital. They also seized on Najib's province of Saharanpur up to the Jamuna. This caused fear in the mind of Abdus Samad Khan, the Durrani Governor of Sarhind. The eastern boundary of his province touched the Jamuna on the other side. He prepared to meet the danger, but the Marathas refrained from crossing the Jamuna.

Adina Beg was not content to remain idle in the hills. He was anxious to secure a strong ally who could reinstate him to his position and help him drive out the Afghans from the Panjab. He therefore sent repeated requests to Raghunath Rao, then in Delhi, to extend the Maratha dominions as far as the Indus, pointing out the rich harvest of spoil within their easy reach and also promising on his own part to pay them one lakh of Rupees for every day of marching and Rs. 50,000 for halting.[2]

The Maratha conquest of Sarhind, March, 1758

The Marathas readily accepted the offer. An advanced division under Malhar Rao crossed the Jamuna at the end of December, 1757 and laid siege to the Afghan fort of Kunjpura. His womenfolk went to Kurukshetra for a religious bath on January 9, 1758. Abdu Samad Khan, the Governor of Sarhind, was busy fighting against Alha Singh of Patiala. On hearing of the close approach of the Marathas, he at once settled terms with Alha Singh, hurried to Sarhind on 12th January, 1758, and entrenched there. A body of his troops was moving about to gather intelligence about the movements of Maratha forces. They came across Malhar's women escor-

[1] *S.P.D.*, II, 83; Sarkar, II, 69-70.

[2] Miskin, 67-8; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 100; *Chahar Gulzar-e-Shujai*, 463; *Husain Shahi*, 43; *Siyar*, III, 64; Ghulam Ali, I, 56; *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 55b.

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ted by a contingent of Maratha soldiers. The Afghans attacked them. The Marathas fought well, slew many Afghans and seized their horses.[1] Malhar Rao, however, recrossed the Jamuna after exacting a tribute of five lakhs from Kunjpura and thus gave temporary relief to Abdus Samad Khan. The real Maratha invasion of the Panjab began about the end of February, 1758. Raghunath Rao, at the head of his vast Maratha forces, was at Mughal-ki-Sarae near Ambala on the 5th March, at Rajpura on the 6th, at Aluen-ki-Sarae-Banjara on the 7th, and in the neighbourhood of Sarhind on the 8th.[2]

Adina Beg Khan cleverly concealed his intrigue with the Marathas, as he could not entirely rely upon them to attack the main Durrani army. So he kept open the door for negotiation with Abdali's government. When the Marathas reached Ambala, he wrote to Prince Timur Shah and Jahan Khan Wazir that the Marathas had come from the Deccan quite unexpectedly like a bolt from the blue and that he was joining them out of policy (Zamana Sazi). As the servant of the Durranis he was writing to them to show that he was true to his salt. They should not delay even for an hour, but should advance at once against the Marathas.[3]

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A contemporary historian of Delhi has given the following account of the Maratha siege and capture of Sarhind in March, 1758:

"The Maratha troops beyond number (said to be two lakhs of men) from this side, and Adina Beg Khan collecting an army of the Sikhs, the worshippers of Nanak, who practised highway robbery in the province of the Panjab, from the other side of the Satluj, came to Sarhind. Abdus Samad Khan, Abdali's Governor, finding himself unable to fight, shut himself up in the fort. The Maratha army and Adina Beg Khan laid siege to the place. After a few days Abdus Samad Khan and Jangbaz Khan fled away. The Marathas overtook and captured them.[4] As the Marathas and the Sikhs thought of nothing but plunder, they so thoroughly looted the inhabitants of Sarhind, high and low, that none, either male or female, had a cloth on his or her person left. They pulled down the

[1]Rajwade, I, 85; Sarkar, I, 72.

[2]*Kaghzat-e-Bhagwant Rae* in Karam Singh, 295-7.

[3]*Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 55b.

[4]Cf. *S.P.D.*, XXVII, 220, *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 56a; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 10; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 133-4.

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houses and carried off the timber. They dug up floors for buried treasure and seized everything they could lay their hands on."[1]

Jahan Khan's movements

When the news of Maratha siege of Sarhind reached Jahan Khan, he at once collected all his troops outside Lahore in order to march to the assistance of Abdus Samad Khan. Fearing intrigue by the Mughlani Begam, whom he had mercilessly beaten, he imprisoned her in Timur's palace inside the fort and appointed four bailiffs (Sazawal) to guard Miskin, who was forcibly taken in his train.[2] In eight days the army reached Batala. From there Jahan Khan despatched an advanced guard (Qarawal) of 2,000 soldiers under Yusaf Khan, Darogha of Timur's Diwan Khana, to scout for intelligence of the enemy in the Jullundur Doab. Miskin also was included in this force. They reconnoitred the Doab for forty days and then, learning of the fall of Sarhind and capture of Abdus Samad Khan, they withdrew to the Beas and joined Jahan Khan who had marched from Batala to that place. The Durrani Commander-in-Chief halted there for eight days, but, being informed that the Marathas had crossed the Satluj and were advancing through the Doab, he ordered the camp to be raised and retreated to Lahore.[3]

Jahan Khan informed Timur Shah of the danger of their position and advised him to retire to Afghanistan. Miskin, who was an eyewitness of the events at Lahore, gives a graphic picture of its evacuation. He says that Jahan Khan decided to leave the town about 9th April and set up his camp at Shahdara across the Ravi. He first conveyed there Timur's mother and his own women relations. The other Durrani chiefs and the troops carried their baggage and property in cart-loads by repeated trips day and night. Meanwhile news was received that the invaders had crossed the Beas and that their advance-guard under Adina Beg Khan and Manaji Paygude lay encamped about 20 kms from Lahore. That very day at noon Timur Shah crossed the river, followed by the Wazir. Their troops set fire to the goods which they could not carry. The eunuchs then mounted the women of Timur and Jahan Khan in litters on camels and horses, and the whole Afghan camp moved towards

[1]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 311. Cf. Ratan Singh, 422-3.
[2]Miskin, 171.
[3]ibid, 171-4.

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Kabul. Miskin quietly brought the Mughlani Begam and her maiden daughter in a covered bullock cart to Lahore and installed them into their residential quarters. The masterless city was in utter confusion and terror. The marauders of the town and its neighbourhood were busy plundering the defenceless people. Miskin did something to check this lawlessness by shutting all the gates at nightfall and patrolling the streets the whole night.[1]

Maratha pursuit of the Afghans

At about nine o'clock, the following morning, 10th April, 1758 (Baisakhi Day) 500 Maratha horse and 100 of Khwajah Mirza's Mughalia troops under Ashur Ali Khan, whom Miskin knew well, arrived at the Delhi Gate of Lahore and showed him written orders from their chiefs. Miskin at once opened the gate and entrusted the city to their care. Khwajah Mirza Khan at the head of 1,000 Mughals and 10,000 Marathas arrived later. The same morning Timur had retired from Shahdara leaving several thousand soldiers in the rear in charge of Mir Hazar Khan. Khwajah Mirza Khan crossed the Ravi and fell upon Mir Hazar Khan, who fled after a little fighting. But with his men he was soon overtaken and captured.[2]

Jahan Khan halted at Sarae Kachchi, 57 km. north-west of Lahore near Gujranwala, but was overtaken by Khwajah Mirza and numerous Maratha and Sikh troops who had joined him on the way. They lacked siege material and Jahan Khan, taking advantage of this fact, succeeded in slipping out of the Sarae under cover of darkness, it being the third day of the new moon.[3] They soon arrived at the Chenab below Wazirabad. Timur and Jahan Khan with their Durrani soldiers had hardly crossed the deep, wide, cold and swiftly running river, when the Marathas and the Sikhs came upon the scene. All the Uzbak, Qizalbash and Afghan soldiers with Timur's entire camp and baggage were on this side of the river. They all fell an easy prey to the hordes of the Marathas and Sikhs who, after slaying most of Timur's soldiers, plundered the camp.[4] The vast stores and treasure which Timur had accumulated during his occupation of the Panjab fell into their hands. This spoil was

[1]Miskin, 174-7. Cf. *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 312; Ratan Singh, 424.

[2]ibid, 177-8.

[3]It took place on the 10th April when the new moon shone only for an hour or so.

[4]*Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 312; Miskin, 178-9.

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brought to Lahore by 20,000 Marathas and 10,000 Sikhs in several trips. Those Afghans who had been left alive were driven in bonds and with gibes by the Sikhs to Amritsar. There they were compelled under blows and whips to clean out all the rubbish with which Ahmad Shah and Jahan Khan had filled their tank.[1] Khwajah Mirza also enlisted many captives in his army.[2]

Panjab leased out to Adina Beg Khan

The Marathas abandoned the pursuit at the Chenab.[3] Raghunath Rao and Adina Beg returned to Lahore on 11th April. Here the Marathas demanded the sums promised by Adina Beg Khan, who pleaded his inability to pay and begged to be excused. The Marathas were enraged and looted his camp. He quietly submitted and on the next day erected in the Shalimar Garden, at the cost of one lakh of rupees, a magnificent platform, on which Raghunath Rao was seated and given a public reception. The fountains of the garden were made to play with rose-water and the whole city was illuminated.[4]

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Raghunath Rao did not wish to remain in the Panjab. It was far from the home of the Marathas and communication was difficult. The climate was unsuitable to them. Its rivers were not easily fordable in the rainy season. The Marathas did not like to live amidst a hostile population. As a frontier province the Panjab was also exposed to foreign attacks, the brunt of which would be borne by them, if they continued to occupty it. Moreover they were failing in making war pay for war.[5] They were harassed by Sikh depredations and thus they were not sure of a steady revenue. Their presence was also required in the Deccan to attack the Nizam. In view of all these factors they decided to place the Panjab in charge of Adina Beg Khan, who was an experienced administrator and could handle the Sikhs. Raghunath Rao therefore conferred the title of

[1]*S.P.D.*, XXVIII, 218; Miskin, 179; *Tarikh-e-Ibrahim Khan* in Elliot, VIII, 267; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 134; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 100-101; *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, 102a-b; *Husain Shahi*, 45; *Chahar Gulzar-e-Shujai*, 463b; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 10; Ahmad Shah, 873; Bakhtmal, 81.

[2]Miskin, 179. The disorder and tumult caused by the Marathas is known in the Panjab as *Maratha Gardi*.

[3]*S.P.D.*, XXVIII, 218.

[4]Khushwaqt Rae, 91; Ali-ud-din, 118a.

[5]The Maratha Government owed a heavy debt of 88 lakhs to their army. Cf. Sinha's *Rise of the Sikh Power*, 51.

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Nawab on Adina Beg Khan and leased the province to him for 75 lakhs of rupees a year. The Marathas then retired to Delhi.[1] Some of Maratha troops were stationed at Multan, Rohtas, Attock and later on at Peshawar also.

Adina Beg did not wish to stay in Lahore and fixed his headquarters at Batala. He appointed Khwajah Mirza Khan, his son-in-law, to the government of Lahore, with Khwajah Said Khan, the brother of the former, as his deputy. His old ally Sadiq Beg Khan was given the administration of Sarhind. Khwajah Mirza wished to be rid of the presence of the Mughlani Begam in Lahore, so Adina Beg took her with him to Batala.[2]

His moderately good position

By April, 1758, Adina Beg Khan had attained to his zenith, having brought all the Panjab from the Jamuna to the Indus into subjection. Now he set about the task of consolidation which was a paramount necessity at the time. He had been known in the Panjab for nearly twenty years. During this time he had impressed his personality not only on those territories which were directly governed by him, but also on other parts of the province. He had made a name for himself by his vigour, discipline and good government. Consequently the masses, who had been ground down under oppression, received him with relief. He took about a month and a half in organising the government and then turned his attention to the disturbing elements.

The Sikhs had had the satisfaction of taking revenge on the Afghans for Jahan Khan's slaughter of their co-religionists and desecration of their holy buildings at Amritsar. But they knew that they would not have things their own way during the regime of Adina Beg Khan, who was too clever for them. Adina Beg Khan was now well placed. The Delhi Government was too weak and distracted to challenge his supremacy, while the danger from the Durrani was for the time removed.

His campaign against the Sikhs

The main consideration for Adina Beg Khan was the collection

[1] *Delhi Chronicle*, 156; *S.P.D.*, XXVIII, 218; Nur-ud-din, 21b; *Khazana-e-Amira*, 101; *Siyar*, III, 64; *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 56a; Khushwaqt Rae, 91; *Tarikh-e-Ahmad*, 10; *Tarikh-e-Ali*, 184; *Irshad-ul-Mustqim*, 295b; Hugel, 265-6.

[2] Miskin, 179-80.

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of 75 lakhs of rupees, which he had to pay to the Marathas. This huge sum could not be collected till the Sikh disturbances were quelled and there was peace in the country, so that the peasants and the merchants could follow their avocations without any molestation. He therefore advised the Sikhs to cease their lawless activities. But they defied him, so he decided to subdue them.

The Viceroy had an army of 10,000 horse and foot. In order to suppress the Sikhs he enlisted a large number of additional troops and called upon the leading zamindars and chiefs in every part of the province to join him in eradicating the Sikh menace and restoring peace and order in the country.[1] He got an encouraging response. The Gakhar, the Janjua and the Gheba zamindars of the Sind Sagar Doab; Chaudhari Rahmat Khan Waraich in the Chaj Doab; Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu, Chaudhari Pir Muhammad Chatha, Izzat Bakhsh Murad, Bakhsh Bhatti and other zamindars in the Rachna Doab; Raja Ghamand Chand of Kangra, Nidhan Singh Randhawa, Mirza Muhammad Anwar of Qadian, the Afghans of Kasur and Daulatpur in the Bari Doab; the Afghans of Jullundur and Alawalpur, Rae Ibrahim of Kapurthala, the Raes of Bankala, Dasuha, Khardunbala and Phagwara and the Rajputs of Rahon in the Jullundur Doab were all persuaded to join him in his Sikh campaign.[2]

With these forces he steadily opposed the Sikhs. On one occasion a strong body of Sikhs, in order to overawe Adina Beg, appeared in the neighbourhood of Adinanagar. He despatched Diwan Hira Mal and Guru Aqil Das of Jandiala against them. The battle, which was fiercely contested, took place near Qadian. The Diwan was slain, his troops dispersed and the whole of his baggage fell into the hands of the Sikhs. Adina Beg was chagrined at this and determined to take more stringent measures against them.[3] He issued strict orders to the lambardars, zamindars and other chiefs to join his forces and made them take an oath that they would attack the Sikhs and drive them away and that, wherever a Sikh was found, he was to be immediately put to death or captured. He also knew that the best hiding places of the Sikhs were the plās jungles in the Mājhā. So he planned to destroy them.

[1]Ahmad Shah, 882-3.

[2]Ali-ud-din, 118b-119a.

[3]ibid, 119a. (Strangely enough the author says that both the Jassa Singhs fought on the side of Adina Beg Khan, which seems improbable).

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That Adina Beg Khan succeeded in his design is shown by the testimony of Ahmad Shah of Batala, who wrote: "All the Panjab zamindars submitted to him and started devising plans for rooting out the Sikhs. Of all the zamindars of the Panjab the Randhawas showed the greatest readiness in destroying the Sikhs. Adina Beg ordered that in no district or parganah should Sikhs be allowed to live. They should either be captured or killed. Mir Aziz Bakhsh was one of his most trusted nobles. Adina Beg appointed him to this duty at the head of several thousand horse. He also entrusted him with one[1] thousand carpenters with steel hatchets and axes for the purpose of cutting down and clearing away the jungles and forests where Sikhs used to seek shelter; so that no hiding place might exist for the people of this sect. The Sikhs were very much perturbed and relaxed their activities. Some fled away and hid themselves, but a body of them, bolder than the rest, showed the greatest gallantry and courage in going to Amritsar, quite ready to lay down their lives at the place of their Gurus. They took shelter in their mud fort near Amritsar called Ram Rauni. Nand Singh Sanghania was the leader of this body. Jassa Singh (Ramgarhia) with two of his brothers and other companions was also among the number, while Jai Singh Kanhiya and Amar Singh Kingra with their followers were likewise concealed in the fort. Mir Aziz, on hearing this, laid siege to the fort. The Sikhs, becoming desperate, fought with great bravery. Jai Singh Kanhiya and Jassa Singh made a sally and killed with matchlocks and arrows large numbers of their assailants. They then returned to the fort and shut the gates. Jai Singh, mounted on a swift and spirited mare, displayed remarkable gallantry by piercing into the midst of the enemy. Though matchlocks were aimed at him and he was attacked on all sides, yet none dared to come near him and he escaped within the fort. At last Mir Aziz succeeded one night in making a hole in the wall of the fort. The Sikhs then sallied out and many were killed or taken prisoners."[2]

The Sikhs now fled towards Malwa. This territory was in the Sarhind Division, where Sadiq Beg Khan was the governor. No sooner had the Sikhs crossed the Satluj than Sadiq Beg, under

[1]4,000 carpenters according to MacGregor, I, 131.

[2]Ahmad Shah, 981-2. Cf. Sohan Lal, Appendix to I, 18-9; MacGregor, I, 131-2.

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strict injunctions from Adina Beg Khan, engaged them in an action near the village Sanghulan. The governor's swivels opened a heavy fire on them and created a havoc in their ranks. They were forced to flee, leaving their camp and baggage to be looted by the enemy. Hotly pursued by Sadiq's troops, they suddenly turned and, as the enemy had left their heavy guns behind, they fell an easy prey to the wrath of the Khalsa. But Sadiq Beg organized his troops who again opened fire, and the Sikhs fled away with their wounded comrades.[1]

At this time when the whole country was ruined by the constant fight with the Sikhs, the rains in July and August entirely failed. A severe famine broke out in the Panjab. "In the country of Majha wheat was not available even at the rate of two seers to the rupee. Adina Beg Khan prevented the import of grain from Malwa in order to starve out the Sikhs. Thus grain became still dearer. This measure hit the poor extremely hard and they left their homes migrating in all directions and with the will of God the Sikhs grew stronger daily.[2]

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Adina Beg Khan's death, September 15, 1758

Fortune favoured the Sikhs. After Muin, the only capable governor of the Panjab was Adina Beg Khan. But luckily for the Sikhs, he held office only for five months. In the beginning of September he fell suddenly ill with colic and after suffering for a few days he died[3] at Batala on the 15th September, 1758.[4] In accordance

[1]Ratan Singh, 425-7; Gian Singh, 734-5; *Shamshir Khalsa*, 97.

[2]Ali-ud-din, 119b.

[3]Immediately after the death of Adina Beg Khan the Sikhs seized various territories.

[4]Miskin (182) present in Batala at the time of Adina Beg's death does not give the date of this event. A Marathi letter in *S.P.D.*, II, 96, dated 7th October, 1758, places it on the 12th Muharram (the 15th September, 1758). *Farhat-un-Nazirin* in Elliot, VIII, 169, assigns 11th Muharram (the 14th September). This does not make much difference, as Adina Beg died about midnight between 11th and 12th Muharram. *Khazana-e-Amira*, 101, mentions only Muharram, the name of the month. A contemporary Delhi Chronicler in *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, 359, followed by Sarkar, II, 77, says that his death took place on the 10th Safar (the 13th October).

The date of the last mentioned authority, however, seems to be wrong. If Adina Beg had died on the 13th October, how could the Marathi letter, dated 7th October, 1758, have stated this event? It appears probable that the news of Adina's death reached the author of *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani* on the 13th October,

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with his will his remains were interred by the members of his family at Khanpur in the Jullundur Doab near Hoshiarpur. Adina Beg Khan was not destined to see the autumn of life. He was lucky even in his death, because the overwhelming forces of Ahmad Shah Abdali, which invaded India one year later and which shattered the Maratha power at the battle of Panipat, would have been first directed against him to punish him for driving Timur Shah from the Panjab.

A review of his work and achievements

Adina Beg Khan was bold, determined, cool, clever, prudent and quick in observation. He was an opportunist who in those chaotic times showed himself equal to any emergency. The greater part of his life was spent in toil, danger and anxiety, yet the ambitious spirit of this wary adventurer could not be crushed.[1] Sometimes he was cruel. The author of *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan* narrates that one day during a meal he expressed a desire for jam. A servant immediately went to a grocer at Jullundur to procure it. The shopkeeper pretended not to possess it. Adina Beg Khan then handed two rupees to another person for jam to be bought from the same man. He got it and brought it to Adina Beg, who felt so much enraged that he condemned the grocer to be boiled alive, as he boiled his jam. The man was only saved by the intercession of Adina's guests.[2]

Land revenue

Nobody can doubt his administrative ability. He governed well at a time when anarchy and confusion were prevailing not only in the Panjab, but also in the whole of the Mughal Empire.[3] His attention was mainly directed to revenue collection. He did not tolerate any default in this respect. Recalcitration on the part of landholders was severely punished in order to teach a lesson to others. The villages of defaulters were often plundered and sometimes reduced to ashes. There was then no such thing as land

when the event was recorded by him in his diary. Ali-ud-din on folio 204b states that the Sikhs, out of revenge for the Khan's recent harshness to them, dug out his grave and burnt his dead body.

[1]Ghulam Ali, 34, 54, 56; *Husain Shahi*, 41.

[2]*Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 58b-59a.

[3]Miskin, 167.

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settlement. The amil, or revenue collector, took what he could from the cultivators.

Administration of justice

In the department of justice his procedure was no less summary. There were no rules of procedure. Muslim law was applied as a rule, though it could easily be dispensed with and the matter could be decided according to the whim of the Khan. An interesting incident illustrates his methods. One day in Jullundur city, he was passing before the house of a Qazi (Judge of Muslim law), when he saw a quantity of ground poppy lying outside. He imposed a fine of Rs. 30,000 on the Qazi for breaking the law of the Holy Quran.[1]

Diplomacy

In diplomacy and statesmanship he was much above the average. He successfully held the balance between the Delhi Emperor, Ahmad Shah Durrani, the Sikhs and the Marathas. He was always ready to intrigue with any power that appeared likely to prove useful to him. While the fortunes of other officials rose and fell with the change of government either at Delhi or Lahore, Adina Beg Khan enjoyed an almost permanent position. He played a cautious part throughout, particularly in his relations with the Lahore Viceroys. He remained obedient so long as the strong and just hand of Zakariya Khan was there. It was after his death that Adina Beg Khan began to display himself in his true colours. He owed allegiance to Abdullah and kept him pleased by sending presents off and on. He showed complete loyalty to Yahiya Khan, but turned against him when Shahnawaz Khan invaded Lahore. Similarly, he persuaded Shahnawaz Khan to seek shelter with Ahmad Shah Durrani, and then informed the Delhi Wazir about it. When the Abdali invaded Lahore, Adina Beg brought about the fall of the young Governor. Having seen the weak resources of the invader with his own eyes, he readily yielded whatever support he could to the Delhi Wazir against Ahmad Shah Abdali in the battle of Manupur. He soon won the confidence of Muin-ul-Mulk, the new Viceroy of the Panjab, but played a tortuous part in the suppression of the Sikhs under his orders, and again during the third

[1] *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 59a.

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Durrani campaign. He openly showed consideration and regard to Muin's widow, the famous Mughlani Begam, but proved the chief instrument in her fall. Afterwards he outwardly submitted to Timur Shah, but privately opposed him and with the help of the Marathas and Sikhs drove him out of the Panjab.

He cleverly used gifts, arms, and favours and often employed a mixture of threat and promise, gratification and persecution, as it suited the circumstances, in order to amuse and subdue the Sikhs. He purchased their favour and service when too weak to coerce them, sought their help by conceding all their demands when he wished to regain the government; and persecuted them when he found himself well established and strong enough to do so.

A Muslim writer pays a just tribute to Adina Beg Khan in these words: "The Sikhs he amused, the Delhi Court he despised, the Afghans he bewildered, and the Marathas he effectually influenced in his favour to break the power of both the Sikhs and the Afghans and to obtain his own independence."

Adina Beg Khan was clever also in keeping the powerful chiefs of the country under him always in good humour. Chaudhari Johri Mal of Phagwara, the hill rajas, Guru Wadbhag Singh of Kartarpur, Guru Aqil Das of Jandiala, Raja Ghamand Chand Katoch of Kangra, Rae Ibrahim Khan of Kapurthala and Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu were his great allies.[1]

Army

The first thing for an able and resolute man situated like Adina Beg Khan was evidently to maintain and augment his military strength, if he wished successfully to fish in those troubled waters. He possessed a good army, which was quite sufficient to meet the needs of his own government. In cases of emergency he recruited fresh troops temporarily and often hired the services of the Sikhs. His standing army consisted of 5,000 horse, 9,000 foot, 10,000 horse and foot of levies of the hill jagirdars, 400 messengers, and news-writers, 5,000 wood-cutters and 5,000 attendants.[2]

His income when he was the governor of the Jullundur Doab was 35 lakhs of rupees a year, excluding the gifts and tributes of the hill rajas. His expenditure was greater than his income. To overcome

[1]ibid, 57b.

[2]ibid. 56b. Miskin (167) places the strength of Adina Beg's army at 10,000 horse and foot. But this number was always varying.

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this difficulty he adopted a peculiar plan. He divided his army into two divisions. The services of one-half were retained, while the other half were given leave. After the expiry of six months, the first half was allowed to go home and the second half was kept on active service. In this way he managed to cut down his military expenditure by half.[1]

In spite of this device, he was sometimes faced with a deficit. Once he was in great financial difficulty. He knew that there was a rich Gosain physician in the hills under his jurisdiction. Adina Beg Khan made a tour in that district and encamped near the village of the Gosain. He summoned him to his camp, pretended indisposition and offered him his hand to feel the pulse. The physician found the pulse beating soundly, which indicated no disease. The Gosain told him that he could have any prescription to his taste.

Adina Beg informed the physician that he was suffering from inability to pay his troops, that the medicine for his illness was available in the physician's dispensary, and asked him to give it immediately. The Gosain, finding himself in confinement, offered him two dishes full of gold coins and thus secured his release.[2]

His family

The author of *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan* states that Adina Beg Khan did not marry and hence he had no issue. He further says that about the end of his life he married a beautiful lady who turned out to be of Sayyid caste. Adina Beg divorced her, though he provided her with handsome means to support.[3] This statement seems to be wrong. The contemporary author of *Tarikh-e-Alamgir Sani*, on p. 260, says that Adina Beg Khan married his daughter to Khwajah Mirza Khan. That Adina Beg Khan had a son is testified by a Marathi letter, which says that the Peshwa, on hearing the death of Adina Beg Khan, and in view of the anarchy prevailing in the Panjab, sent Dattaji Sindhia from Poona with a strong force to restore order and settle the government. He reached the Satluj early in April, 1759, and lay encamped at Machhiwara for about three weeks. Adina Beg's son paid him a visit at this place, rendered submission, and paid him some of the arrears of the tribute of his

[1] *Ahwal-e-Adina Beg Khan*, 58a.
[2] ibid, 58a-b.
[3] ibid, 61b-62a.

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father. He also advised Dattaji Sindhia to take over the administration of the Panjab directly into Maratha hands.[1]

Another contemporary writer, the author of *Khazana-e-Amira*, on p. 101, states that on Adina Beg's death, the Marathas appointed Adina Beg's widow to the governorship of the Jullundur Doab. Sayyid Ghulam Husain says that Adina Beg Khan left behind him a widow and a son, who fled to Delhi in October, 1759, on the occasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion.[2]

Let us conclude in the words of eye-witness Tahmas Khan Miskin who came into close contact with Adina Beg Khan:

"Adina Beg Khan, faujdar Doaba, had served since the time of Abdus Samad Khan, father of Khan Bahadur. He was celebrated for justice. He held charge of the parganahs of the Doaba permanently for long. He always kept the subahdar pleased by his good behaviour (Husan-e-saluk), faithful service (Neko khidmat), and by remitting his annual tribute regularly. In the whole region of the Doaba he had established such peace and order as nobody during his rule raised lamentation and made no complaint. Robbery did not exist at all. To what extent can his other qualities of intelligence and wisdom be described? In administering justice he stood unrivalled and unequalled."[3]

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The Marathi records are not regular histories, but only newsletters and reports. As such they are of very great value, giving us a good deal of original material with exact dates not available in the Persian histories of the period. These letters come to our assistance frequently from 1758 onward, when the Marathas held this province in their occupation. Much of this matter has been printed and the rest is seeing the light of the day gradually.

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English

The English were at Calcutta when they heard about the doings of the Sikhs in the Panjab. The far-sighted statesmen of the British Government could not lose sight of such an important people; and consequently they began to take a keen interest in their life and character. We come across references to this effect as early as 1767 when the Sikhs were offering a stout resistance to Ahmad Shah Abdali, then on his eighth campaign *CPC*, II). With the beginning of the seventies of the eighteenth century began their systematic attempt to acquire more and more knowledge about the Sikhs. This quest continued as late as the seventies of the nineteenth century, when Sir Lepel Griffin compiled his celebrated works entitled *The Rajas of the Punjab* and *The Punjab Chiefs*. We are, therefore, very much indebted to the British Government for our present knowledge of the Sikhs.

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